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CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN

GENERAL BARKSDALE HAMLETT

and

COLONEL JACK RIDGWAY
LIEUTENANT COLONEL PAUL WALTER

AY 1976

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INTERVIEW WITH GENERAL BARKSDALE HAMLETT

by

Colonel Jack Ridgway
Lieutenant Colonel(P) Paul Walter

THIS RECORDING IS IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE US ARMY MILITARY HISTORY RESEARCH COLLECTION, SENIOR OFFICER ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM. THE SENIOR OFFICER BEING INTERVIEWED IS BARKSDALE HAMLETT. THE INTERVIEWERS ARE COLONEL JOHN J. RIDGWAY AND LIEUTENANT COLONEL(P) PAUL B. WALTER, BOTH FROM THE US ARMY WAR COLLEGE CLASS OF '76. TODAY'S DATE IS 23 JANUARY 1976. WE ARE AT HILTON HEAD ISLAND AT A MOTEL NEAR GENERAL HAMLETT'S HOME. THIS IS INTERVIEW #1, REEL #1.

GEN HAMLETT: I'm sure this is of no historic interest to anyone but my own family, but you have asked me to talk with you about my early childhood and why I went to West Point and some of the things that were important in my early life. So, I'll begin by saying I was born in Kentucky, in the town of Hopkinsville. My father was the superintendent of schools in Hopkinsville. And though I still have friends in that town, I remember nothing of my days in Hopkinsville as a child because we left there when I was three years old. My father had been elected as the superintendent of public instruction for the State of Kentucky and we moved to Frankfort to the seat of the state capital. So, my first memories of my childhood are centered in Frankfort, Kentucky. We lived in an apartment house very close to the capitol grounds when we first arrived in the town. And one of my first memories is sitting on the capitol wall and watching an old fellow in a Pierce Arrow coming down Shelby St. hill. If you look at the Old Taylor whiskey bottle today, you'll see that old gentleman's picture on the bottle. It was old Colonel Taylor with whose product I became better acquainted in later years. We left Frankfort after four years and my father who had been disappointed in a political race for the Secretary

of State bought a newspaper in Columbia, Kentucky.

INTERVIEWER: About what year was that, General?

GEN HAMLETT: That was in 1917. My formative years, if you want to call them that, were spent in the foothills of Kentucky on a ridge between New Cumberland and Green Rivers where I became interested in hunting and fishing and outdoor life which I have pursued ever since. It was a very fine environment in my opinion for a youngster to be reared in because it was a town of religious people; backwoods, yes; and people who worked with their hands a great deal. There was no wealth in the county, no wealth of any sorts. So, we were all about the same level. And I had many friends who were interested in the same things that I was. I became interested in athletics, too, at this time and later worked diligently to make the high school basketball team. I actually burned myself out with basketball before I ever went to the Military Academy where I had no desire to play the game. My father died soon after we moved to Columbia, Kentucky, and my mother took over the running of the newspaper. Now, this was very unusual for a woman in those days to become actively engaged in business. But she did and became quite successful, raising a family of three. I'm the middle child. I had a brother seven years older and a sister seven years younger. And seeing that we all got college educations. She was a very religious, sincerely religious person. So I was subjected, if you want to say that, to Sunday School and church from the time I can remember until the time I left West Point. For in my time, religious services were something you had to attend, which I understand is no longer true.

INTERVIEWER: About how old were you, sir, when your father died?

GEN HAMLETT: Ten years old.

INTERVIEWER: Ten years old. And how old would your mother be?

GEN HAMLETT: My mother died in 1953 at the age of 69. Now you figure that out, and we'll see how old she was at the time. I guess she was 42 years old.

INTERVIEWER: General, did you ever work on that newspaper at any time?

GEN HAMLETT: I started working on the newspaper when I was about 12 years old--setting type and helping with the presses. I could run every press in the shop by the time I was 14 and became a first-class typesetter even before then. Actually, I learned to spell sitting next to a very fine lady named Miss Mamie Smith. And, you know, how kids aren't very good spellers; however, in those days we were taught to spell in school. We had spelling bees and things that taught you the three Rs, which I hate to say are not done anymore in our schools. I wish they were. But she taught me to spell because every time I'd hit a word that I thought was misspelled in the copy that I was setting up, she would set me straight on it. Even to this day, I remember the spelling of most words, large and small in the English language. She was a great old character, Miss Mamie Smith. She stayed with the newspaper until she was almost 80 years old at her death. She became the bookkeeper later. It was a small newspaper; I mean it didn't have a very big staff. My brother took over from my mother after graduating from Centre College in Kentucky and then he made quite a success of the Americana News. And we owned it right up to his death. And I inherited the whole shooting match after his death. I sold it. I wasn't about to

go back into the newspaper business in Kentucky. I went to Columbia and Adair County High School located in Columbia. At that time, of course, our schools weren't integrated in Kentucky. The colored or black schools were out on what was known as the Pike, but we had a good relationship in Columbia between the whites and the blacks. There was never any trouble. And when schools were integrated in Kentucky, there was never any trouble at all in Adair County High School like there was in so many schools in the South, which is, I think, a tribute to the good people who lived in that small isolated community. We didn't even have a railroad in Columbia. There were five counties there in the center of Kentucky that no railroad touched at all. We were isolated. I remember in the early days there, I say early days, my early days, we had no refrigeration. You had a cellar where we kept things in the summer and winter, both; and you bought your milk every day from some local person there and during the winter, you lived on country ham and chickens which you killed the day you'd eat them. There was no--at that time in this town there were no indoor toilets. Everything was outside, "chick sales", though I had known about the better things from life in Frankfort. This was really a rather isolated rural community living in the 19th rather than the 20th century.

INTERVIEWER: What was your primary mode of transportation back then when you were a young man?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, automobiles were coming in then, but there were very few of them. Going back to Frankfort, Colonel Taylor and his Pierce Arrow coming down the hill, I think that was one of three automobiles or

four in the city of Frankfort. The others were generally owned by doctors. Now automobiles started coming in in great numbers soon after, I'm talking now about 1912. Well, from 1912 on up to 1920 was the big push by Henry Ford and all the other automobile makers in the Detroit area; so you saw more and more automobiles. I think we bought our first automobile, which was a Hudson Super Six, in 1920. I believe it was 1920 or '21, maybe '22. My favorite car that I remember from my boyhood was a little Ford roadster, model "T" that my mother bought for us. My brother was in college, Centre College, at the time and I had a great time with this car until he found out about it and then he took it off to college with him; so I didn't get to use it very much from then on.

INTERVIEWER: Were you riding horses or bicycles?

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, I had my own horse and bicycle, both at the age, I guess, around age 11, 12, 13, or 14. I had it for four years.

INTERVIEWER: What was the age differences between you, your brother and sister? You say you had a brother and sister.

GEN HAMLETT: There was seven years. My brother was seven years older and my sister was seven years younger.

INTERVIEWER: How about the influence that they had on you? Your brother, did he become more or less the man of the house or was . . . ?

GEN HAMLETT: No, because he was never home. He was off at school most of the time. He was off at school almost constantly, until I left home to go to West Point. So, it couldn't be said that he was the man of the house. There wasn't any man of the house at all; it was my mother. She was the guiding influence and honcho of the Hamlett family in those days.

She was quite capable of being that. She was quite a strict disciplinarian though very fair. I never had any bad memories of my childhood. It was all pleasant. I had lots of fun--fishing, hunting, trapping. I even enjoyed going to school for some reason. I became interested in a military career, I think, through the library that we had right at home. My father, having been an educator, had compiled a very, very fine personal library. And Mother, very fortunately, when we moved to Columbia and bought a home there, rigged a library in one of the rooms where we had lots of books from child stories to the classics. And I became an avid reader at an early age, and I loved military books and we had quite a few. Some of them, I don't even remember the names of them, having to do with West Point and West Point graduates and Annapolis graduates. And I became very interested in the military. We had a Congressman at that time, the Honorable Ralph Gilbert, a very fine person. And, you know, politicians always listen to people who own newspapers and when my mother asked him if he could arrange an appointment for me, he said he certainly could. He'd like to see my go to Annapolis, which was all right with me as long as it was military. So, I was given an appointment to Annapolis when I was a junior in high school. I was supposed to go to Annapolis in 1925, but unfortunately the Honorable Ralph Gilbert took a cruise to the Far East on one of the Navy ships during the summer. That was the "boondoggling" that the Senators and the Congressmen did in those days. They went on Navy ships to see the world. And he went off on a cruiser, and he came back from this cruise and called a family conference and said he had changed his mind about my going to Annapolis. He said he was

disenchanted in the behavior of Naval officers. He said he was very surprised to learn that in every port the Naval officers would rush to bars and drink whiskey and some of them even came back to the ship, staggering at night. So he didn't want me subjected to this sort of leadership and wanted me to go to West Point. Fortunately, he never visited any Army post, I presume, or I might not have gotten to West Point either. So, he gave me an appointment to West Point for 1926, and, again, fortunately, you didn't have to take mental examinations at that time if you had a high school record. I think it was 15 subjects you had to be competent in. And again, I had gone to the local junior college for a year because getting ready to go to Annapolis, I had left high school after three years and entered college on the strength of the credits I had for the first three years; and also, to play basketball because they were developing a good basketball team and they asked me to come over and play with some of the graduates that I had played with in the high school that we all attended. So, I had some college credits as well as high school credits and was able to get into West Point without taking a mental examination, because I'm sure I couldn't have made it at the time. The schools that I had been to weren't good enough to prepare you for those examinations. As a result, I had a terrible time my first year at West Point, just staying there, just surviving, because everything was new to me that we were going through.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of grades were you making in Kentucky, in high school?

GEN HAMLETT: Good grades. You wouldn't believe it, but I was the #2

man in my high school class. I had an A average in college. But those grades, compared to the competitiveness of West Point, were down in the failure class.

INTERVIEWER: Well, before we move on to West Point, there are a few things that I'd like to return to your early childhood on, sir, if you don't mind. Do you remember anything about your grandmother or your grandfather on either side of the family?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, yes. I remember both my mother's parents and my father's parents. I knew both of them. My mother's parents much better. My father was a Virginian. He had been born and reared in Prince Edwards County. His father was a farmer although most of the family living there around Farmville, Virginia, owned farms. And he went to Hamden Sidney College which is very close to Farmville. Somebody told me not long ago that there were more Hamletts that graduated from Hamden Sidney than Smiths, which is rather unusual. I'm not sure it's true, I haven't checked up on that. Hamden Sidney, by the way, is a very fine school, always has been classified as one of the better schools in Virginia. So, I only accompanied him to Virginia on two occasions where I met my grandparents on my father's side. My mother was a Kentucky girl, having been brought up in Harden County, near Elizabethtown. She had gone to school at a school which is now defunct, Peewee Valley Academy, I think it was called. It was a type of day school they had in those days for girls because girls at that time, very few of them ever went off to college or universities. I mean it was only the men that were given the opportunity for so-called higher education in those days. So, I would think her

education was probably compared to a high school graduate of today. The Grandfather Crume--my mother's name was Crume--was one of the finest old gentleman I ever knew. He was a great fellow. And I used to go to Elizabethtown to spend a lot of time in the summers with him even when I was a kid in Columbia because the two of them were alone and for some reason they liked to have me around. And I enjoyed the association very much with my grandfather Crume.

INTERVIEWER: Did you hunt with him or fish with him?

GEN HAMLETT: No, not at all. This is a strange thing. He had no desire to hunt or shoot guns or have anything to do with it. He was a gardener. His hobby was gardening, raising vegetables and things. He used to furnish all the neighbors with vegetables. My first memory of being with him was when he had the Standard Oil agency in Elizabethtown. And in those days the oil tanks were pulled by horses and he had a beautiful horse and buggy. And I can remember going around with him from place to place riding in the buggy and behind us came the oil tanker, pulled by mules. I guess we were selling coal oil. I guess that was the big thing for, you know, for stoves and so forth. There was very little gasoline. He did handle gasoline, too, but he retired from the Standard Oil Company, I think, unfortunately. If he had stayed in that business and invested in it, it would have made a lot of difference later on. Though we were poor, we were never destitute so that didn't make any difference, really. He retired and didn't do anything for three or four years, but got tired of this and was offered the job there in Elizabethtown as the, I guess you'd call it the manager of the American Express Company in Elizabethtown.

Railway Express, that was it, not American. It was the Railway Express Company. He took this over, and I can remember the big office and store-room for all kinds of things that came by railroad. In those days everything was moved by railroad. There wasn't any trucking around because the roads wouldn't hold the trucks up. And he died, still on the job. And I believe he passed away when he was 68 or 69, somewhere in that neighborhood. My grandmother came to live with us after that. She was a fine old lady, never any trouble. And she lived with us until her death. I was away when she died. That was later, I was in the Army by that time. I was a lieutenant. I think she lived to be 78 or 79.

INTERVIEWER: What did you older brother do then after . . . ?

GEN HAMLETT: He graduated from Centre and then came back home and took over the newspaper. He ran the newspaper until his death.

INTERVIEWER: When was his death?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, I've got to think a minute because I was at Norwich University as the President of the University at the time. It was '66, he died in '66.

INTERVIEWER: General, you were about eight or nine years old when World War I broke out. Do you remember anything at all about that?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, yes, yes. We used to go up to Louisville where we had a very good friend. His name was Radford, and W. T. Radford had spent two years at West Point and I'm a little vague on why he left West Point but I believe it was because he failed mathematics as a yearling.

However, when the war broke out, he volunteered and I'm not sure whether he had a National Guard commission or what it was, but when we went back

to Louisville to visit on two occasions, he was home as a young captain. Now that was in 1917 or 1918, I forget which year. And he was a very attractive, very fine person. And at that time, we had Camp Zachary Taylor at Louisville, right in the center of Louisville. There was for years an airport there, but that's not where they put the big airport. It was sort of a local airport for a long time. And then, of course, Knox was just out of town. And I remember very well, going to Camp Taylor and watching the recruits being drilled, and, I guess, this had something to do with my interest in the military. And, of course, after the war, young kid as I was at the time, I was very much impressed with the return of the heroes. See, Sergeant York came from not too far from my home. And so I grew up hearing about all the great World War I heroes and talking to some of them who thought they were.

INTERVIEWER: Well, there was a great national pride in the Army from World War I and World War II.

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, yes. And you didn't hear much griping by the people returning about the conditions they found in the Army or anything. Of course, naturally, they were all happy that the war was over and they were out and were willing to come home. But there was a great pride, a great pride in what they had accomplished.

INTERVIEWER: How about aunts and uncles, sir. Did you have any aunts or uncles that influenced your early life?

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, my father had--he was one of 11 children. Now, he had one brother in Kentucky that we used to see quite often. He was also an educator. He was superintendent of schools in several different towns in

Kentucky. We saw him. I wouldn't say he influenced me any because he wasn't around long enough. My mother had a brother named Crume, who lived in Louisville. That was the one that we used to go up to visit in Louisville. He was a very fine man, just a great person and made an awful lot of money for those days. He was a banker; he was with the Lincoln Bank & Trust Company there in Louisville. I think he was assistant cashier. But he got caught in the crash in '29 and '30 and lost his shirt. And like so many people at the time, it really affected him. He was never the same after that. This was common in those days. People were jumping off buildings and everything else because they saw their whole life's work just wiped out in this crash of the market and he was heavily invested in the market. And that taught me a rather good lesson, and that's to be very careful about buying stocks on margin. And I'd never buy stocks on margin for anything. So it had some, maybe, impact on making me careful with money affairs and making sound investments instead of fly-by-night things. My wife says I'm still making fly-by-night investments at times. I've done pretty well with investments. He, my uncle Ed Crume, had a wife, Elizabeth Crume. She was Elizabeth Grimes from Louisville, Kentucky, and one of the finest ladies I've ever known in my life and still alive at the age of 89 with a mind as clear as a bell and gets around and has more fun going places and doing things. She visited two or three times in Vermont when we were there. And she had more influence probably on me than some of my immediate family because although not a blood relation, I've always thought of her as being Aunt Elizabeth; she is a very solid person. After the collapse of the wealth

of my, that my uncle had accrued in '29 and after his death, she went to work which was unusual again. Even at that time, women . . . she went to work in Stewarts in Louisville, which is a big store there. You've probably heard of it. She worked there for 25 years. She ran the drapery department, and did real well, retired. She is a very independent person and she has a son, my first cousin, Joe Crume, who has been very successful. He retired just last year as one of the senior vice presidents of Brown & Williams Tobacco Company. People like that draw down six figures and I'm sure he had for years. But she doesn't want any help from him. She has her own money that she saved and put away. Great old girl!

INTERVIEWER: You said you enjoyed hunting and fishing as a boy. Do you want to talk about how you became interested in these sports?

GEN HAMLETT: One of my first childhood memories was being in a kennel full of bird dogs. Being curious about this as I grew older, I went to my mother and I said, "Mother, where in the world was that kennel and those bird dogs?" And she said, "That was in Frankfort and your father at that time had a wonderful Lewellen bitch that had 18 pups. And he kept all of them until they were about four or five years old." And she said, "You were in that kennel quite often with that mother with her 18 pups." And she said, "They used to try and eat you up." So that was one of my first memories. And my father loved to shoot and when he passed away--I might add that my father was a brilliant man but he was unfortunately an alcoholic and he drank himself to death. This is what happened to him. But he loved to shoot and fish and hunt. And in Adair County when we first

went down there, we did for the first six months down there, hunt together. He'd take me out with him when he would go quail shooting. And I have some pictures, now I don't remember this even in Hopkinsville. I was sitting in the buggy--he had a horse and buggy--with a bird dog and my father with his shotgun. We had been out quail shooting. He had taken me out and that is how I got started.. Dogs who were always and bird dogs in particular are a hobby of mine and I had bird dogs when I was just a kid. I remember one fine bird dog. A new Baptist preacher came to town, and my mother was a Baptist--we were Baptist--and she had a very beautiful voice. She had been trained to sing and she ran the choir in the Baptist church. She was what is known as a Mezzo Soprano, which is a low soprano voice. But every now and then when she would sing and she would hit one of those high notes, it used to scare me to death because I was afraid she was going to break her voice and lose it on that high note. I asked my brother not many years ago, I said, "Did it ever worry you when Mother was singing a solo, and she would hit that high note?" He said, "I used to be worried to death that she wouldn't carry it through." But this preacher came to town and he had a big setter dog, and when he came in those days you'd invite the preacher to Sunday dinner. And that was the first Sunday dinner that he was having with us, we talked some about hunting and fishing and so forth and how good it was. He said, "Well, I don't hunt or fish but I have a good bird dog that a man gave me down in Georgia last year, and you can have him if you want him." I said, "Well, I'd like to look at him." I was 15 years old at the time. No, I was 16, I remember, and I'll tell you later how I remember the age.

But I took that dog and brought him home, and he was a beautiful dog and I was very anxious to take him out and try him, and fortunately it was just at the beginning of hunting season. And I took the dog out, went into a field and he threw his head up, went right to a covey and came on a most beautiful point that you ever saw. I went in and flushed the birds, knocked down two birds and that dog went out and retrieved the first bird and brought it in and put his paws up on my chest to hand me that bird. That's how beautifully trained he was. I'm sure that preacher had stolen that dog, because no one would ever give that good a bird dog away. Well, I knew that dog. I hunted with him that season and the next season and then when I left, I left the dog with my mother and told her, I said, "Now, that preacher gave me that dog and I'll bet you anything he is going to come back here and try to get that dog back, because he has heard now discussions all over town about my having the best bird dog in Adair County." Sure enough, a year later, he came and got the dog without saying anything to my mother and left town. He left town under a cloud by the way, but he took my dog and that was the last we ever heard of the preacher or dog. So, that's one of my memories as a youngster. Besides my father being dead by the way and my mother having so many friends around, the older men who liked to hunt and fish would invite me to go with them. I went out quite a bit with older men who taught me things about dogs and hunting and shooting and whatnot and I was a good shot with a shotgun and rifle, both, though there was no big game there. I had a little single shot. 22 rifle and I could kill a running rabbit with that rifle. And I could hold my own with the older men by the time I was 15

on quail shooting, which isn't unusual. A lot of kids in the South who have done a lot of shooting are good shots. I continued to pursue the dog game for many years, including field trial dogs.

INTERVIEWER: The men that you were hunting with, were they farmers or business men?

GEN HAMLETT: Farmers, no. We used to go out and be given permission to hunt on a farm, I mean. We knew all the farmers practically in Adair County and some of them would go out and shoot with you occasionally, but no, these were men who had some little business or a mechanic in a garage or a barber or somebody like that. One insurance agent that I hunted with more than anyone, Chelsey Barger, a very successful insurance agent. And another fellow named Press Miller. I don't remember what Press did, if anything. You know, a lot of times you find that in communities of that sort that the quail hunters and fishermen are not the most energetic types and you wouldn't find farmers who were working pretty hard, spending much time on the river or in the field. I don't mean to say that people who hunt and fish are ne'er-do-wells but every now and then you find one that is. Do you have anything else on that before we . . . ?

INTERVIEWER: What were some of your other hobbies? You said you enjoyed reading and hunting and fishing. Did you have any other hobbies?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, basketball playing. I wanted to play football but we didn't have a high school football team. And another reason I quit high school after three years, I didn't have to go another year, I mean I had all the high school I needed, was that they were organizing a football team at Lindsey Wilson Junior College and so I played football

there a year before I went to the Military Academy and basketball with the crowd, not crowd. There were four of us that went from the high school to Lindsey Wilson and all played on the basketball team and football team.

INTERVIEWER: Were you ever in the Boy Scouts or . . . ?

GEN HAMLETT: Never. There was no Boy Scout troops in Kentucky and in Columbia, Kentucky, at the time. I feel that I would have been. I would have enjoyed very much the Boy Scout type of thing. I've always been a great supporter of Boy Scouts, but I didn't have the opportunity to become a Boy Scout.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned earlier that your schools were segregated. Did you have any friends that were black?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, I knew all the blacks, yes. I had friends that were black. I mean we would play together and things of that sort. They lived in one world and we lived in another. I grew up with the old segregation thing that you didn't violate. I mean there were certain things that you just didn't do in those days.

INTERVIEWER: Was there a Klu Klux Klan?

GEN HAMLETT: No Klu Klux Klan at all in Adair County, no.

INTERVIEWER: That must have been a scary thing to people living just a little farther south?

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, I'm sure it was, but we didn't have any of that sort of thing in my part of Kentucky. We would read occasionally about some Klu Klux Klan clambake in some other part of the state, but we didn't have that sort of thing.

INTERVIEWER: How about any teachers? Did you have any teachers that

you really recall that were of great influence on you in your early days?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, I think all of us as we look back can think of teachers who had influence, who influenced you. Yes, I remember one teacher that I had for two years, I guess, who was a very, very religious and opinionated lady who was so opinionated about religion and these sort of things that it had a bearing on my attitude towards religion later. Now, you can't believe this, but this old lady would tell us and this was a completely Protestant area that I lived in and we didn't know anything about Catholics, but she had the idea that Catholics were the worst things in the world. And we used to be told about these horrible things that the nuns and the priests would do and this sort of business. Well, I didn't believe it at the time, but it impressed me though that here was a person trying to teach young people and actually teaching them absolutely the wrong thing about life. I had another very fine teacher in high school who was just the opposite, and again, a woman. And in those days, most of the teachers in your schools were women. I mean very few men. The men were in administrative side of the secondary school system, but very few of them were actually teachers. I think in all my first eight years, from the first to the eighth grade, I had only one year that I had a male teacher. And he gave it up after one year and went to farming because it wasn't the life for a man in those days. Of course, you see a lot of them now, but not then. This was a very fine woman, though, and she encouraged me in my feelings about going to West Point or Annapolis. Of course, we didn't have an Air Force Academy in those days. It was just West Point and Annapolis. Very fine woman.

INTERVIEWER: What were your favorite studies, General?

GEN HAMLETT: Mathematics, I always liked mathematics. I never had any trouble with mathematics. History, I loved history. Still do. I read a lot of history when I get a chance. Mathematics and history. English, I used to be bored as the devil with English. Learning all about poets and poetry didn't impress me very much. But I realized that it's a part of everyone's education and always tell my grandchildren this.

INTERVIEWER: You had to learn your history--I mean English in the newspapers, didn't you?

GEN HAMLETT: Yes. English not history, yes. As a matter of fact, you did have to because there was so much editing you had to do on the correspondents because we had county correspondents, who rode in from places like Little Cake and Cane Valley and this sort of thing and we would have to correct their English structure and whatnot, and then they would get mad at you for having changed it.

INTERVIEWER: You spoke of working in the newspaper office. What other jobs did you have as a young man?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, that was enough actually to keep me busy, however, the last summer at home I asked my mother if I would work outdoors. I was tired of working indoors during the summer period, and she agreed to this. And a friend of mine, who later became a doctor, and I secured a contract, my mother and his father actually signed the thing, to clear a right-of-way for a new road, Highway 80, going through our town through about four miles of second growth forests. And we spent that summer clearing that right-of-way. That was the hardest, hottest work I ever did

in my life. And we were falling behind schedule and we had to go out and hire a crew of men to come in there and finish the work, and that really ruined our whole summer. When we got through and totalled up, we had made \$51 a piece. That was hard work.

INTERVIEWER: You didn't have any chain saws back then, did you?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, there were no chain saws. It was all cross cut saws and axes. And we had a team of mules with a dog that we pulled the logs out with and we stacked it all. And we had to pay drayers to have it hauled in to the mill where we sold the logs and then we cut up what we called in those days, tree laps. Well, it's the tops of the trees that you cut off and pile that up. We had a power saw, a cross cut saw and we cut it into links and sold that for wood. In our town all heat was by wood. We didn't have any coal. It was all wood heat, either grates, fireplaces, or our airtight stoves we called them. And, of course, most of the cooking was done in big cook stoves that burned wood. And most kitchens would have a big wood stove and then over on this side a coal oil stove. A lot of coal oil was burned in those days for cooking and starting fires.

INTERVIEWER: You indicated that your mother had been trained to sing. Was she a college graduate?

GEN HAMLETT: No, she went to a little school. I mentioned that earlier called Peewee Valley Seminary or something like that. It was in Peewee Valley, Kentucky, which is just outside of Louisville. And I presume from talking with her that it was a type of finishing school, a girls school equivalent to a high school. She spoke beautiful English though and

wrote a Spencerian hand. Her handwriting right up until her death was just beautiful, sloping, you know, and she wrote very fast and she was ambidextrous. She could use either hand.

INTERVIEWER: You control many foreign languages. Did you get any indication back in your school days that you liked language study?

GEN HAMLETT: I don't like them yet. I never liked language studies. I was a horrible student at West Point. I was always in trouble with French, not with Spanish. Spanish was very easy for me because in high school I had had, I think, three years of Latin. With a Latin background, Spanish was very simple. But French, particularly the pronunciation is very difficult. So, all languages were not as you think. They didn't come easy to me. They were very difficult for me. And why anyone wrote an order to send me to the French War College in 1946, I'll never know. I tried to find out, but it's still a mystery to me. Now, I had a real struggle there; because my French was very, very rudimentary and here I was going to school with everything in French. Fortunately, they weren't tough on us, very lenient towards the three Americans there in school. Woody Stromberg was one of my classmates there. He is now living in Paris and Woody spoke very good French. He helped me a great deal as a matter of fact explaining what was going on in school after we got home at night because for the first four or five months, I didn't understand anything. And then it started coming to me and by the time I left the French War College, I was fairly fluent. Horrible French, I suppose, because the French used to laugh at it but they understood it. And then, of course, my wife is bilingual in Spanish and they spoke Spanish in her family. Her

mother's people are from the west coast of Mexico. They are an old so-called hacienda family that dates back to the early days. I think the first record of some of her family came in, they came in with Cortez into Mexico. And most of her people, her mother's people, were educated in Europe. So they were educated people and they spoke a very fine educated Spanish. And I learned a lot of Spanish just absorbing it from her. Then when I went to Germany, it was after the war in 1955, we went to Germany and one of the first weeks we were there, she came in one day and said, "I cannot understand anything these people are saying, and I'm going to start tomorrow studying this language and I'm going to learn to speak it." Well, within six months the Germans weren't sure what part of Germany she came from. This motivated me and I started studying German. When I went to Berlin as Berlin commander, I had a tutor every morning from from eight to nine o'clock and before leaving Berlin, I became the second commander who had ever been able to converse with the Germans in German. Max Taylor was the other one. And I was even making speeches in German before I left there. I'd have them written out and would accent them and I could read those things off and the Germans thought this was great, just great. It made a big difference in your ability to work with them, yes.

INTERVIEWER: General, when we broke, we were discussing your childhood and I was wondering if you had any close childhood friends that you still remember or that were close enough to you to influence your thinking.

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, as a matter of fact. In a small town like Columbia I think all youngsters had close friends unless you had something wrong with you, but obviously I didn't have. We were a very close-knit group

of youngsters my age who started school together. Of course, I started school in Columbia when I was ten years old and went on to high school and one year of college with a particular group of boys. And they all had some influence on me that was pretty good or bad. One of my dearest friends and was until his death was a boy named Henry Sandusky. His father owned and ran the local lumber mill which produced all types of building supplies from the forests that were logs that were brought in. And it was a well-equipped mill, and Henry and I used to play around the mill as youngsters. Unfortunately, I think Henry was 12 years old when he was running a planer and his left hand was caught in the cogs and cut his hand off clear up through the wrist. From then on, he wore an artificial arm with a hook that he had on it. And amazingly enough was that he was adept at most things as any of the rest of us. Henry and I used to build boats down in his father's lumber yard because the lumber was free and so were the nails. And I remember one time when his father complained because he said we had three boats in different places on Russell Creek and Green River and he thought that was a waste of his good lumber. But he was good natured about it and was really kidding us more than he was admonishing us. He was a great person, his father. Mr. Sandusky used to encourage us to go out and hunt and fish and do the things. So, I would say Henry was my close fishing and hunting companion. Though he could shoot a rifle pretty well, he was not much good with a shotgun because of his left hand. He couldn't swing the gun fast enough. There were several other youngsters in this crowd. I remember one boy that I thought very highly of and still correspond with him occasionally,

named Lyne Price. Lyne's last job and he is retired now was the sales representative and vice president of the company for Ben Hogan golf clubs. He came into Washington one day and presented me with a set of Ben Hogan golf clubs. I protested rather weakly that this might be a clash of interest of some sort and he said, "Hell, these are not from Hogan, these are from me." So, I thought if an old boyhood friend wanted to give me a set of golf clubs, it wouldn't get us involved in what is the company known as--Hogans, AMC, who did have some government contracts. It really pulled my conscience to take those. The other two boys that I remember so well, a youngster named Harlan Judd. I was always very, very fond of Harlan, who was one of the finest athletes I've ever known. He did everything, could play any game, a great baseball player. He went to Georgetown College and then took a law degree some place. And, you know, I haven't seen Harlan Judd since I left home for the Military Academy. He practiced law in Berksville, Kentucky, for years. I'd hear of him, but I haven't seen him. He was a very fine person. He was a boy who was deeply affected by things, a very quiet type, very religious. Never said a swear word and he used to admonish the rest of us for cursing. And I must admit my language was pretty bad even as a kid. It hasn't improved much either. But I remember Harlan very well and Doctor Mercer was another youngster who I grew up with. He was a very good athlete, too. He went to the University of Louisville and got his M.D. from the Louisville medical school. He did very well as a local doctor in Columbia. I never saw much of him after I went to the Academy. He's dead now. I don't know what ever happened to Harlan. Sandusky, Henry Sandusky, I saw

Henry every time I went home. Henry and I'd do something together if it was just cracking a jug and having a few drinks which we both liked. But, he died three years ago of cancer. Great person. He left a family, several children. I understand they are still in the lumber business. I hope doing well.

INTERVIEWER: General, most of us have done something when we were young men that we either got caught at or very lucky we didn't get caught at. Did you ever have any brushes with some minor troubles . . . ?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, yes. I got caught at several of mine. I remember one for putting one of those giant firecrackers in a big tank that someone had left parked at the public square. And though we weren't having bomb scares in those days, this bombing was traced to me and I was brought before the city magistrate who threatened to put me in jail but never did. One of the things that occurred which I didn't get caught at and I'll have to tell you this story was the time a friend of mine--I had a friend by the name of James Conover who lived out in the country. Now, James wasn't part of this group that played basketball together because he had to come in from the country to school and then go back every day and being on a farm, actually they owned two farms, big farms. His father was one of the big farmers of Adair County at that time. James worked a lot more than the rest of us and he didn't have time except on weekends. But, I used to go out to Conover farms occasionally on weekends particularly during the quail season, the hunting season, because they had good shooting out there. Squirrels and rabbits and quail and James was sort of my gunning companion. They were building a road between the two farms that had to

go across a creek. The creek was Pettes Fork. They were dynamiting to make a channel through the rocks going down to the ford and we found out where the foreman of the job was keeping his dynamite and we just quietly lifted two sticks of dynamite and two blasting caps and some fuse from this supply of dynamite and waited our time to use it as we thought we should, to see if we could blast a little bit, too. Well, the following weekend I was at Jimmy's out in the country and we'd usually go in to town in the saturday to church. So, we begged off going to church on this particular Sunday, and after his family had cleared, we went down to the barn, a big barn with a fence all around the barnyard where we had stored our dynamite. In the back barn lot was a tremendous stump. I don't know whether it was an oak tree or what kind of tree it was, but it was an old stump. One where the tree had been cut years before, and it had washed out underneath the stump so you could very easily put something under it. So we arranged our dynamite having watched this guy fix the fuses and whatnot, and we shoved it up under the stump as far as we could and lit the fuse and ran for the barn. Well, we got in the barn and looked back through the cracks, you know. All those barns have big cracks in the doors, but we had forgotten one thing. And that was the curiosity of a hog. There were about ten hogs in this back barn lot and they heard this fuse sizzling and saw the smoke and they all congregated around this stump. Well, there was nothing we could do because we didn't want to get blown up, but just wait. And, of course, the dynamite went off with a terrible blast and the stump went up in the air and hogs went in all directions. Well, sir, we were naturally, absolutely scared to death.

We didn't know how many hogs we killed, but we did know we didn't want to be caught at this hog killing. So, we very carefully went back to the barn lot, retrieved the stump and we had a terrible time moving it. We had to get crowbars to move it back into the hole, and then meanwhile the hogs had not been hurt really very badly. There wasn't a one of them knocked out. They were all able to drag away from the place. Some of them were bleeding a little bit around the ears and nose, but they all seemed to be able to navigate. And we got the stump back and everything put in order and it took us all morning to get this thing back and we had just cleaned up and finished this when we heard the family coming back, and we hid in the barn, never went back to the house. We went out on the creek, fishing. We didn't have anything to do. We were just out there shivering. We came back in the afternoon and, you know, the family never knew about that at all. The hogs all recovered. Nobody ever noticed it and nobody ever noticed that that stump had been put out of place. That was one that we got away with. Thank God! You asked me while we were in our break there about my brother and sister. What influence they might have had and all that. The truth of the matter is that my sister being seven years younger and she being a girl and I being a boy, we never had much to do with each other. She lived in her little girl's world and I lived in my big boy's world. She was a beautiful child. And I loved her very much, but, I mean, there wasn't any companionship. At the same time, my brother was off at school. He never came to live in Columbia. He stayed in the Frankfort area and went to school there and afterwards the Centre and would come back for certain

periods. He developed tuberculosis while at Centre College and went out to Colorado. Mother sent him out there to a sanitarium. But, he wouldn't stay. He said he would rather die at home than out there. So, he came home, and I saw more of him the year that he was there sick and he was in bed most of the time. So, we did become very close friends at this time. I mean I got to see more of my brother while he was there at home sick. He recovered from tuberculosis and really it never affected him from then on. And he was always very careful, too careful, in fact. And we were nothing alike whatsoever. He was a socializing type where I was the hunting and fishing type. He liked people and parties and things of that sort whereas I wasn't much concerned with until I found out about girls and then that made a big difference, of course. Anyway, we did become great friends and remained very close friends all through life. And he was always very good to me. I remember the first car I ever bought for myself was on my graduation leave after leaving West Point. I went back home and he was running the newspaper at the time and he said, "You've got to have an automobile." I'd been ordered down to San Antonio, Texas. And he said, "You can't go down there in this day and age and get along without an automobile. You've got to have an automobile. Now, let's buy you one." So, we went over to the Ford agency there in town, and they had one car. Now, this was after the collapse, you know. This was the start of the Depression and things were real bad already, particularly in rural areas where the farmers were having a lot of trouble getting rid of their produce. And that's what we all lived on was farming. I mean one way or another. So, he said, "Let's go look at that

Ford they got over there. I'll bet they would sell it for a good price." Well, we went over and haggled with these people. They wanted \$520 for it, a brand new Ford, a Ford Roadster. And we didn't have \$520. But he said, "I'll tell you what, Barksdale, what we'll do. Let's go over to the bank and get \$420 in ten dollar bills and then we'll go back and talk with him a little more." My brother was a great trader right up until his death. He was always trading something and making a little money on it. And we went back over to the Ford place and Edward had this big roll of ten dollar bills. Now, he said, "I'm going to tell you what we are going to do. We are going to offer you \$420 for that Ford and that's all we've got and that's all we are going to give you." And he started counting it out, 10-20-30-40, and you could see this fellow. And he was thinking, you know, that's real money, that's real money. And that's what we paid for that Ford. And I drove it out of there for \$420, a brand new Ford Roadster. I had that Roadster for three years, oh, it was a good one. Three, why, it was four or five years. I took it out to Hawaii with me after marrying and brought it back with me from Hawaii. I drove it across the continent twice, great car.

INTERVIEWER: What would that be? A Model A?

GEN HAMLETT: A Model A, four cylinder Model A, with a cloth top on it, you know. I bet I painted that Ford a half dozen times, you know, black. It was a black, everything was black then. Henry Ford believed in black. So that's my brother, that's the kind of companionship we had though we were never together very much it was always a real fine companionship.

INTERVIEWER: Your sister would have been only about three years old when your father died.

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, that's right. Now my sister was a different proposition because I never got to know my sister, really. She grew up and went to Centre College, which had become coed by that time. When my brother first went to Centre, it wasn't coed. However by the time my sister went to Centre, it had merged with Kentucky College for Women, making it a coeducational institution. My sister went there for, I guess, three years. This was while I was in the Army. I had graduated from West Point. I was out in Oklahoma by that time. Yes, she came to visit us once at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. I remember that. Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful girl, and lovely girl, very nice in every way, but she was determined to get married and she did. And she married a tremendously wealthy man. He was 20-some years older than she was and a martinet of the first water. I never liked him, nor did my brother. Though he gave her anything she wanted that was flashy and showy so he could brag about it, she didn't even have her own bank account. She'd have to come to us sometimes or to my brother, not to me, for money. This was the type of life she was thrown into. And then he wanted children so she had four children, and after the birth of the fourth one, she just literally went around the bend. And the eventual break-up was she got a divorce from him with a good settlement and went off to Europe. And she was there for a couple of years. And what she was doing, I don't know but I'm sure it was not very good because she came home a mental case, a real mental case. And eventually, it fell in my lot and my wife's lot to have her put in a sanitarium in Louisville, Kentucky, where we had friends and doctors who could help us, and she stayed there for 14 years before her death.

And again, fortunately, the former husband had to foot the bills because it was part of the divorce write-up. And she died there from a heart attack at age 53, I guess it was. Very sad, very sad business. A girl who just got into something she couldn't handle. And I never see the family. I never hear of them. I don't know where any of them are, probably I should. She had three lovely girls who were all at her funeral, which we went back to Louisville and handled. They came to the funeral. And that's the last I've heard of any of them.

INTERVIEWER: Was divorce seriously frowned on when you were a young man. The idea that when you get married that it would be for lifelong . . . ?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, you are asking me a question now that I'd have to dredge up my memory and come up with something that I couldn't document. I don't remember. Yes, divorce as far as the church was concerned was a terrible thing. I mean it was something that you thought of very, very seriously for a long time. And divorcees were very few and far between in those days. So, I presume that--oh, naturally, it was frowned upon much more than it is now. It's become sort of a way of life now.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have any town characters that you recall? You talked about your boyhood friends . . . ?

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, and the name of that fellow is Barger, Chelsey Barger. He was a character, a real character. He was a periodic drunk, and when he got on a drunk, he was a hard one to handle. And my association with him put me in a position where even as a youngster, I used to have to take care of old Chelsey. And Chelsey was a wild one. (Ha) He was

a character, he really was. There were people, of course, that to me as a child were all characters. The older people in town--doctors, lawyers. One of my best friends among the older people there, and my brother, too, a man who we were both very fond of was a doctor who lived next door to us, Dr. Woodruff Flowers. And he was a great fellow. When other young chaps and I would come home from the Military Academy on leave, we were drinking bootleg whiskey. Dr. Flowers insisted that he give us prescriptions for the finest bourbon. So, we always had a good source of bourbon when we wanted it. I don't mean we were drinking too much of it, but when you went to a dance and you needed a little something to pep you up, Dr. Flowers would always take care of us. And his wife was a very, very fine woman. She was a school teacher and unfortunately had to keep on teaching school because Dr. Flowers never kept any books. He treated everybody in the county, was out all night, half of the nights in the week, and never kept a book. People paid him sometimes, most of the time they didn't. So poor Mrs. Flowers had to teach school to keep the family going. And this is a true story. I mean he was the epitome of the country doctor, of the best type. He'd beat a car to death every year. He had to get a new car every year because they were just beaten to death over country roads, great fellow. He had been in the Army by the way. Again, something that influenced me toward the military. He used to talk about being in France as a young doctor. He was offered a good position, and I got this from his wife. He never talked about what he had been offered, in a big hospital in New York. He turned it down in order to come back home to Columbia. That's where he had been born and brought up.

He had to come back home and look after the home folks, which he did, a great person.

INTERVIEWER: You were a teenager and a very young man during prohibition and the roaring twenties. And legal and illegal liquor must have been as confusing as it was tempting. Did any of your young friends take to it so quickly that they were becoming alcoholics or did you have . . . ?

GEN HAMLETT: No, no. None of my younger friends. You always found alcoholics around in every community, but none of the youngsters that I grew up with and went to dances with and that sort of thing would ever drink enough. We'd sometimes have two or three drinks and act like we were drunk because we thought this was big business, you know, big stuff. But we were pretty careful about the whiskey. You had to be careful because you never really knew what you were getting. I would say no, none of us ever drank too much as I remember.

INTERVIEWER: Were there stills around the countryside?

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, there were stills. I remember one day I was driving-- my mother used to like to go out and take a drive on a Sunday afternoon, and we were coming into town from one of the good roads out of Columbia, and here was an old fellow walking along with a big burlap sack over his back full of something. And my mother said, "Sonny, let's take that poor man into town. He's laboring under that load." I said, "Mother, I'd rather not pick him up." "Oh," she said, "come on, let's pick him up and take him into town." Well, I knew who he was. He was a bootlegger, and I knew what was in his sack, several jugs of whiskey. So, I said, "Okay, Mother." And we got him in the car and went on into town, and he

asked to be let outside of the village about a quarter of a mile and we drove on. And Mother said, "Sonny, did you know that man?" because I had spoken to him. And I said, "Yes, Mom, I did." "Well, I wonder what he had in that sack?" I said, "At least six jugs of whiskey." And it nearly killed her because she had taken part in a bootleg operation.

INTERVIEWER: How would you compare being raised in a small town as compared to a large city? Do you think this is a big advantage for a young man?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, I do. I really do. You see more of the political side, more of the religious side, more of the association of people. You see all types whereas in a city a kid lives in a certain little community and, you, know people in cities are not friendly like they are in rural areas. So you get in a narrow way of life. You don't learn about what makes cows. You don't get to go out and help slaughter hogs and go out for the castration of colts and this sort of thing. You learn a lot about life in a small town and a community that's surrounded by a farming community which Adair County was that you'd never learn in a city. You'd get to sit around and listen to the local lawyers and judges talking. I remember I used to go to a lot of trials in the courthouse, murder trials, rape trials. I'd have to sneak in if Mother knew it was a rape trial because she didn't like to have me hearing all that stuff. This was interesting and this was life. I learned about government that way rather than in books. So, I would say--oh, rural life at that time was so much more interesting and broadening. They might call you a country bumpkin, but a country bumpkin knew a lot more about what was going on in the

community than the kid raised in the city. And if you'll look back, you'll find that at that time the bankers and lawyers, the good ones, all came from rural communities. Not all, but I mean it was their background, I think, was more suited to big problems than being raised in a very narrow environment within a city.

INTERVIEWER: Can you think of anything else that you'd like to discuss about your childhood that you think we might have missed?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, people always ask about religion. Well, my religion was that I went to church and Sunday School every Sunday because that was part of the life in those days. You just did it. And frankly, by the time I graduated from West Point and having done the same thing there, I've become sort of immune to church and church life and whatnot. Though I still feel I'm a Christian and a religious person, I take issue with an awful lot of things that go on in the churches and so forth. I wouldn't want to get into a discussion and that's one thing that I've tried to avoid and have all my life is getting into arguments about religion. You don't make anything by doing this. Everybody has his own ideas about it and there is no use trying to change them. They are going to stick to it.

INTERVIEWER: I think that this is probably a good time for a break.

GEN HAMLETT: All right.

INTERVIEWER: This will be the end of the first side on reel #1. This is the flip side of the first reel. Well, General, we've talked about your early childhood and what influenced you to go to West Point. We've got a little bit on that influence. Why don't we pick up where we had the

transition from the Naval Academy to the Army and let's pick up there and see what transpired after the Senator came back and talked to you?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, as a matter of fact, I left out one thing in talking about the background which led to West Point and that had to do with a friend of my brother's. He also was a friend of mine, who had been a childhood friend in Frankfort, Kentucky. And he and my brother had been very, very close, and this boy went to West Point and graduated from West Point in the class of 1924. And after graduating, I had the opportunity the summer of 1924 to talk with him at great length about West Point and what West Point was and really to learn more about the school from someone that I had known for years as a child than I had ever learned from books or anyone else. I was still, though, headed at the time towards Annapolis which he thought was all right. I mean there is a similarity in the training that you got at the two schools. His name was Paulsgrove, Robert C. Paulsgrove. He resigned from the Army not too long after graduation. You may remember that the class of '24 was so large they permitted people at that time to resign without doing their two years. So, he resigned from the Army before his two years were up, and I always felt that it was because he married a girl who was quite a homebody and didn't like the service. And, you know, you run into that all the time. Girls influence the husband, the young husbands in particular, to get them out of the service. And we won't argue with that, but that's why Paulsgrove got out. We called his "Sonkey." Isn't that a funny name? Sonkey Paulsgrove. Another friend that I had that I haven't mentioned before in my childhood who later came into the Army was

a fellow named Garnett, James Garnett. James and I were very closely associated just as babies, and he was a mean little devil and he used to clobber me with most anything that he could lay his hands on. This was in the Frankfort time between three and six. And later, James and I saw a great deal of each other in the summers since he had an aunt who lived in Columbia, Kentucky, and he used to spend his summers there with her. I didn't see James for years after leaving Columbia to go to West Point, but he came into the Army during World War II. He was then a well-known young lawyer in Louisville, Kentucky, liked the Army and stayed on and retired as a full colonel. He got a Regular commission and was a JA out in San Francisco of the Sixth Army when he retired. He still lives out there. Anyhow, Paulsgrove, Sonkey Paulsgrove, had a lot to do with my going military, the military way I would say. And another person who had a bearing on what happened to me at West Point was a professor who was the president of the local college in our local town and who was a great mathematician. He . . . I took a course in mathematics from him the year before I went to West Point in which he really crowded my brain with things mathematical. He was a very fine mathematician, and it stood me in good stead when I got to West Point because I never had any trouble whatsoever with mathematics which still is the most difficult subject in the school. Well, I entered West Point July 1, 1926. And in those days, of course, every one of the Academy graduates that you talk to will tell you that his plebe year was the worst that they ever had at the school, that they were hazed more than anyone else ever was and whatnot, but we . . . the hazing had reached a crescendo that year and we had another

Congressional investigation because of the hazing, and actually I believe there were two or three first classmen suspended from the Academy because of things that had occurred during our summer in "beast barracks." It was a trying experience to say the least for a boy from rural Kentucky to enter West Point, but you were among a lot of other country boys, so everyone had companions in misery and it made it much easier. I remember one thing very clearly--the first morning--and my roommates that I had been thrown in with were a fellow named Lermond and for the life of me I can't even think of the other fellow because he only lasted three months. But the hellcats, you know, the music started beating, the drums and the gun went off just at daylight and this fellow who was from Missouri--I wish I could think of his name--jumped out of bed. He was on the upper bunk and said, "Hurry up, men, there is a fire, fire. We got to get out of here." So, we all ran out in our pajamas and were shooed back in very quickly by the first classmen. He didn't last very long, that fellow that thought it was a fire. Lermond, though I roomed with Lermond for two years and he was one of the world's great distance runners at that time. He was an Olympic's Gold Medal winner before he went to West Point, and became one of the better known track stars of that era. He was from Boston and I had an awful time understanding him and he had an awful time understanding me. I spoke Kentuckynese and he spoke that Boston Irish Brogue that I didn't understand but that was all right. I made many friends at West Point, you always do. And we had a very fine class, the class of 1930.

INTERVIEWER: Had you traveled much before you went to New York in 1926?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, yes, indeed. I'd been to Indianapolis once and Cincinnati

once. I can remember seeing the Cincinnati Zoo. Boy, that was one of the big periods of my life when I was growing up.

INTERVIEWER: Well, that was your first real exposure to eastern America?

GEN HAMLETT: First time I ever saw eastern America. And I was on the train coming east and this fellow looked at me from across the aisle and he said, "I wonder if you are going where I'm going?" I said, "I don't know." He said, "I'm going to West Point." And I said, "Well, I'm going to West Point, too." His name was Moore, Chief Moore, and that was his nickname. Chief Moore and I spent the night in New York before going up to West Point and we went out to a big Italian restaurant that night. Man, that was some city! I'll tell you, it'll overcome you. I was glad to get out of it and get on up to West Point, but I wasn't a little later. You know

INTERVIEWER: General, you didn't leave any girlfriends behind in Kentucky when you left for West Point?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, yes, yes, indeed. I had a girl that I had fallen in love with just a month before, and she was a lovely, lovely girl. I don't know what ever happened to her. I never saw her or heard of her after that. She was from Lexington. I had met her at Centre College. I had gone up there for what corresponds to June Week. My brother and I had gone up to be with some of his friends and mine. I never saw the girl again, but I sure was in love when I went to West Point. It didn't last very long though. I had other things to think about. There was one--I'll have to tell you this because this had an impact on my life. Now, you're talking about what had an impact on my life. There was a character

in Columbia named Herb Taylor. Herb was a fine person and we all liked him, all the kids. And he had the local haberdashery where you bought your shirts and your suits and all that sort of business. And we all traded with Herb, most of us did. And he had a back room in the store where we played cards. We'd go back there and play pitch. I don't know whether you know what pitch is or not. High-low jack in the game and we'd bet maybe a quarter on the game and that sort of thing. Big gamblers. And Herb put up with us. God knows why, but I guess he liked us, too. We disturbed him all the time and he'd run us out every now and then. The day before I left, I went down to tell Herb Taylor good-bye because he was my good friend. Herb said, "Aw, there is no use in telling you good-bye. Hell, you'll be back within three or four months. You'll never make it up at that place." And I never forgot that. Boy, there were times when I wanted to "bug out" as they say, but I always thought of what Herb Taylor said, "You'll never make it." And I said, "I'll let that son-of-a-bitch know I will make it." Excuse me for the language.

INTERVIEWER: So, you were a little bit apprehensive when you arrived at West Point?

GEN HAMLETT: Yes. And that helped me stay there, though. Another thing that happened in my yearling year--I believe it was--they instituted a new office at West Point. A dean. Now the dean set up office to review deficient cadets' grades and talk to them. They never had that at West Point before. But if you became deficient, you know, and they grade you every week there, you'd have to go in and talk to the dean about your problems. And it wasn't very long until the dean had me in. And you were

asking me about languages--it's French, I was deficient in French for two years. I just barely squeaked through every examination time. And the dean talked with me about my grades and so forth, and I told him I just had trouble with French and he said, "Well, that's all right now. You just keep working and do so and so." Well, I was working as hard as I could. I was spending all my time on French because I didn't have to spend much time on math. I'd had all the math before, and English, I was doing all right in English. And those were the only three subjects that you took. The rest of it was, you know, military stuff. Well, I was called up to the dean's office just before the WRITS. The WRITS come, you know, at the end of each semester when you have a series of examinations and if you fail those, you take the final examination. And I knew I wasn't doing any better so I went in to see the dean and saluted, sat down, and he said, "Well, Mr. Hamlett, I'm going to quit worrying about you." And I said, "Well, why is that, sir?" Well, he said, "I have here a letter from your mother and it's a great letter," and he read it to me. And it said something like this, "Dear Dean, I know how that boy can worry you. He worried me a lot, but just quit worrying about him. He always does all right in the examinations." And he said, "If your mother believes in you that much, I'm not going to worry about you any more." That was the last time I ever called on the dean.

INTERVIEWER: Did you ever consider quitting West Point during your first year or your second year?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, sure. Everybody does. You think about it but you get over it. You know, kids get discouraged in that type of atmosphere, and I think it's a good thing because it weeds out a lot of weak ones that

if they come up against a real tough problem later on in life that means life or death for some other people, you don't want them making the decisions. I believe in tough schools.

INTERVIEWER: You mention Mr. Lermond was your roommate. Do you remember any other cadets in your company that you made friends with in the early years?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, you made friends with all of them. I mean there were very few people, and I wouldn't want to mention the names of the people that you didn't like. Your association, of course, was very close with the plebes during the plebe year because they were the only ones that you really talk to. But after plebe year, then you branched out and made friends in other classes, and I had a lot of friends in other classes besides my own. You don't just stick with your own class after the plebe year. Yes, I had very, very close friends. Two of my closest friends and people who I really loved, one of them died as a cadet. He was a roommate named Throckmorton from New Mexico. A fine boy. He would have been a great officer but he got a strep throat and in those days there weren't any antibiotics as you know, and he didn't take care of himself. "Ham" Howze was rooming with us at the time, and finally we took him to the hospital, practically forcibly took him down there. We were first classmen, seniors, and made him go in and see the doctor. And the doctors broke him in the hospital and he was dead a week later. They just couldn't do anything for him. He had waited too long. I loved that boy, and he was a great person and we were pretty sad, of course. That is a shocking thing for young people--to lose somebody that close to them. I had a

young fellow named Gibner, Bunny Gibner, came up and said, "Look, I'm going to move in with you guys. You need somebody to pep you up." He was the quarterback of the football team. A fine athlete and one of the smartest guys I ever ran into, a person with a tremendous brain and drive and energy. And we had always been good friends, I mean, I had never roomed with him. Well, he roomed with us the rest of that year. He went into the Air Force and was killed two years after graduation down at Barksdale Field, Louisiana. I had just been down there to see him; and as a matter of fact, he picked me up in Memphis, Tennessee, in a training plane and had flown me down to his place and then we had flown on over to San Antonio. Training flights, of course, you never flew people around just to be flying them around. They were always training flights. So, they were two of the people that I think I thought as much of as anyone else in my class, and they didn't last very long, unfortunately. Bunny would have been a great general in the Air Force if he would have made it. Ham Howze was a great fellow. He and I were roommates. He was one of my very, very close friends. Bob Porter, I mean I could name them all in those days the class was small enough that you knew everybody. Winston Rose Maxwell, isn't that some name? Winston Rose Maxwell, great person. He went in the infantry and died on the death march in Bataan. He was a great soldier and a great fellow.

INTERVIEWER: There were so many of your classmates that later did become generals. Did you feel that you could almost pick them out ahead of time?

GEN HAMLETT: No, I think you could pick out some of them. For instance, Larry Norstad, I don't think there was any doubt in any of us that Larry

would be a tremendous success. On the other hand, I've another classmate who retired as a colonel, who I would have said would have been the first in our class who would have been Chief of Staff of the Army. He retired as a colonel. A great person, smart, had everything. I won't tell you his name, you might know him, but I love him. He was one of my dearest and closest friends, but he was unlucky. He just never got the breaks, and there are people like that in the military service that all of us know. They are great people, great leaders, good soldiers and all that. They just don't get the breaks. I think the breaks have a lot to do with promotions. And, of course, the competition in the military service, and you are too young to realize this, is tremendous. I talked with . . . I was talking with Cy Vance one time when he was Secretary of the Army about this, and he said, "You know, I came in here, I didn't realize, I had no idea of the talent that you have in the military services." He said, "It's unlimited. You've got so much you don't know what to do with it." And there is a lot of truth in this, a lot of truth in this. So, the competition is . . . and it's very, very high. We are competitive and we've never really had a good system of evaluating our officers. Never have had a good system. I worked on it and I know that a lot of other people have worked on it, but it's just a very difficult thing to do. A good evaluation system. And so this has to do a lot with what I'm talking about, breaks. Being put under a man who helped you and then see you develop and then give you credit for it. Whereas, you get with another fellow and he doesn't help you any and he takes--you know, he doesn't like something that you are doing, so that becomes the only thing

you can do and you get a bad efficiency report. And in this game of the military, you get one bad efficiency report and you've had the course. And this is not good. But, let's get back

INTERVIEWER: What were your career aspirations when you first went into the service? Did you have any . . . ?

GEN HAMLETT: To stay alive and keep healthy and keep getting that \$125 a month because we were the few people who went out in the world in 1930 who had a job. Boy, this was tough, I'm telling you. You young people don't remember those days. But bread lines and soup lines all over the country and people were in awful shape. And here we were, a bunch of young squirts coming out of the Military Academy with jobs. And that's why I didn't mind going over to the bank and my brother and I together borrowing the \$420 to pay for that Ford automobile because I knew I could pay it off at \$5 a month and that was what I was doing.

INTERVIEWER: When you were talking about competition, the West Point class standings, of course, had always been regarded as the order in which things were happening. Can you recall in the early days the pressure that was put on you in school to finish as high in class as you possibly could? You finished very well in your class.

GEN HAMLETT: I finished right in the middle and I never had any pressures from anyone to finish high in the class because I never got up in the competitive area. The competitive area at West Point is in the upper sections, the first and second sections of each one of the subjects, and if you don't get up there, you really don't get competition. If you take an interest in something you try to do your best, but you don't get

competitive. So, in the goat or middle section the guy that got competitive, the people didn't like that. If you want to get competitive, go on up to the first and second section, go compete with those guys, don't try to compete down here with us. I remember one time a classmate of mine and I who both liked law. And I did; I liked the subject of law and this was first class year. But I worked at this thing. I studied law and did what they told me to do and, my gosh, we found ourselves. Buster Perry was his name. He was all-eastern tackle on the football team and otherwise not very bright in his studies, but in law he was a whiz. And I became a whiz and we got up in the first section. Well, we stayed up there for two weeks. And I said, "Buster, I can't take this. These guys are cutting each other's throats. I never saw such competition, academically, and I don't like it." He said, "I don't either. Let's bust out." We just got a few bad grades and went back down to the third section where we were happy. That's where the competition was--up in the upper section. All these people were academically competitive to a great degree but not competitive necessarily in other ways. I think I've always been professionally competitive, yes, and I worked like a dog in service schools to be #1 because this was my profession, and I attained it a couple of times or close to it. But it wasn't academic competition. I didn't like that kind of competition. But when it was whether you get out there at Fort Sill and put that fire down faster than the other fellow or come up with a better solution in tactics, I was damned competitive. There is a difference there, and I found that many of these people who had been competitive academically just sort of gave up in the face of

this sort of competition. Isn't that funny? Did you ever think of it that way?

INTERVIEWER: I had thought of it in that way. I found it the same way. The studies had always been hard for me. I don't think they were as hard for you.

GEN HAMLETT: No, I never found . . . except languages. And you thought I was a linguist. It's my wife who is the linguist. She can learn any language. She speaks five languages.

INTERVIEWER: Did you ever go out for any varsity sports?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, yes, I went out for football and lacrosse. I went out my first year, my plebe year, I was talked into going out for basketball. I decided I had played all the basketball I ever wanted to play because I was suffering with problems with my feet. You know, hitting those hard floors from the time you are about 12 years old through high school and one year of college, my feet were giving me trouble all the time. So, I went out because they talked me into it, having had a pretty good record in high school as a basketball player. And I worked out for three days on the floor at West Point, and I just told them I didn't want to go out for basketball and I'd like to be relieved from it. The floor there was laid on concrete and there is an awful difference in floors, playing basketball. Some floors are spongy and some are hard. And if you lay wood on concrete, you've got a hard floor. And I couldn't take it. It was just breaking my feet down. And I was worried about the feet going on me and not being able . . . so, I went out for boxing. I went out first for football in the fall. I gave up basketball during the try-outs in the

summer. You know, you get the plebes in, they want to find out what you can really do. So, I said I didn't want any part of it; I want to play football. Well, I had played one year of scratch football. It was a terrible team. We played high school teams in this junior college, and I liked football. I liked the contact and all that. But I wasn't very big. I was 5'10½" and weighed 150 pounds. So, I went out on the plebe team and I was doing all right. I made the first plebe team and I broke my arm in a pile-up. Well, I didn't play football anymore that year. I went out for boxing that fall and was doing all right on the boxing squad. Now, why in the world anybody would get mixed up in boxing, I don't know. But I had boxed a lot as a kid in Columbia. We had a middleweight champion who had his training camp right near our town, Hugh Ross. You never heard the name, but he was the middleweight champion and he would take kids out there and work with them and I'd box with some of the kids around there, beat on each other, and I thought I was pretty good at it. I went out for boxing and I got into the finals for the welterweight championship my plebe year, and I fought a fellow named Jack Joyce in the class of '29. And he literally beat me to death. He was a real good boxer and had a terrific right hand, and he really beat me to death. They had to stop the fight, so that was discouraging. I went out for football the next year and worked hard at it, but I soon learned I didn't have what it took to play football at West Point. In those days the varsity team at West Point was made up of former college football players. They never recruited high school players; they recruited college players. And you could get college players because it was during the Depression and this

was a way of getting a free education. So, we had college graduates who would come back in just to play football. Harry Wilson, Lighthorse Harry Wilson. I don't know how many times Wilson was an All-American, but he had been an All-American football player before he ever came to West Point. And I know he was All-American twice at West Point. Chris Cagle, you may have heard this name. Greatest running back I ever saw in college football. I never saw Red Grange play, but Cagle was out of this world, three times All-American at West Point.

INTERVIEWER: Those were the years when Fordham and Notre Dame were very big football powers. Did you go to any of those games?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, yes. I saw Notre Dame play, I guess for four years. When we played Notre Dame in New York, the whole corps went down there. That was also the first year I was in the Academy. Strangely enough West Point and Navy played for the national championship in a game out in Chicago to open up Soldiers Field. And they took both schools out there, complete Navy and West Point, every cadet went out there who could go. I'll tell you a funny thing happened. You ought to have some engineering experience. We went out to Soldiers Field in the morning, marched out there, and marched through this cold down Michigan Avenue, sleet. My hands froze to the rifle. I had gloves on, of course. When you changed over, you had to break your hand loose like that, you know. We all walked in this mud around the field and lost our overshoes. They were rubbers, you know the kind. Nobody ever got them back. And we got back to the hotel-- we were staying at the LaSalle, I think it was the LaSalle Hotel--and everyone, of course, hadn't had the opportunity to go to the bathroom for several

hours in this cold weather, and everyone hit the bathroom at the same time and they all flushed at the same time. And it flooded the first three floors of the LaSalle. That's a true story, awful mess, awful mess. We went out on the train.

INTERVIEWER: Was beating Navy as much a thrill as . . . ?

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, that was . . . this was a tie game, 21-21. And the end of this game caused a change in the rules of football. As I remember, it was a blocked punt, and Trapnell came in. He was a defensive back and about on the 10- or 15-yard line, he kicked the ball accidentally. It went into the end zone and he fell on it for a touchdown. Well, the next year they changed it. You can't kick a ball any more, either accidentally or not into the end zone. It has to go into the end zone from the other team. You saw that happen last week in that big pro game where the ball punt was blocked and it went clear through the end zone, but if it had gone into the end zone from the impetus of the kicker and the other side fell on it, it would have been a touchdown. But the other side couldn't kick it in. That's some of the funny things that happen. I don't know, there are so many things that happened at West Point when I was a cadet that it is very difficult to take you through from A to Z.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned some sports. Did you belong to any club like the glee club or any . . . ?

GEN HAMLETT: No, I never could sing. I tried out for the choir. Everybody had to try out for the choir. Old man, I forget his name, listened to me once but said that's all.

INTERVIEWER: Do you sing on the parade field?

GEN HAMLETT: That was awful. I didn't play any musical instruments; I did monkey around with athletics. As I say, I learned as a yearling that this was a real losing game for me to try to make the football team. Now, I got way up for a little fellow. I got to be on the first B-squad team. Played in a couple of games, dressed for a couple games, and the third year I was there, the team went out to Stanford, California, and I remember Biff Jones was the coach. And I hadn't been out for football as a junior, and I saw him one day and he said, "Hey, you want to go out to California with the team?" I said, "Well, yes, I'd like to." Well, he said, "If you want to come down and draw a uniform and work out for the next two weeks, and I'll take you out there with us." And I thought that over very carefully and meanwhile I had fallen in love with another girl in Kentucky and I thought it was better for me to go home and see my girl than it was to go out to California with the football team.

INTERVIEWER: Let's talk about your trips back home to Kentucky. Did you get much leave time in your plebe year?

GEN HAMLETT: None. I didn't get any leave at all until after 18 months at West Point. There was no Christmas leave or no summer leave for plebes in those days. Now I must say . . . I'll tell you it wasn't good. As a Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, I approved Christmas leave for the plebes. I didn't ask anybody. I had the authority to do it, and I just approved it.

INTERVIEWER: Based on your own memory?

GEN HAMLETT: Based from my own memory. And that was real difficult not being able, not only difficult but you became too disassociated from family

affairs and whatnot in that time. Too long, I think, for a kid to be isolated from his people. Now, my mother did come up the summer after my plebe year for a visit to West Point. And we didn't have any money; we were poor. Thank God we had this little newspaper which provided a decent income, but this was quite an expensive trip for her to make just to see me for a few days. I was certainly glad to see her. We had an old hotel there then. That was before the Thayer Hotel was where it is now. The old hotel was over on Trophy Point, and she stayed there at the hotel and I had dinner with her at night. Even then we were so busy in the yearling camp doing all these things, you didn't have a chance to see anybody during the day, just for a short time late in the afternoon.

INTERVIEWER: When was the first time you got to go back to Kentucky?

GEN HAMLETT: Christmas leave my second year, my yearling year. Christmas leave, I went back to Kentucky then.

INTERVIEWER: You met your girlfriend then?

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, that's when I fell in love again, with a Kentucky girl, wonderful girl. I don't know what ever happened to her either.

INTERVIEWER: Were you the first man from your town to go to West Point?

GEN HAMLETT: As far as I know, I was, yes. Later there were some Adair County boys who did go and have gone to the Academy. I haven't kept track of these people, but there were others later. As far as I know, and I'm sure I'm wrong about this, that never (I shouldn't say never anyway) but no one could remember anyone from Adair County having gone to West Point before I went there.

INTERVIEWER: You must have been a local celebrity then in your gray?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, not a celebrity. I would say it made an impression on them. It made an impression on them, particularly when I came home after graduation in those pink britches and high field boots. I remember one old man--and my wife tells this story on me--he saw me in my high boots and everything and he said, "My God, there is Miss Daisy's youngest boy. He never had shoes on until he was 15, and now he's got them on clar up to his knees."

INTERVIEWER: What kind of a service, service obligation did you incur?

GEN HAMLETT: Two years, the obligation then was two years. And you know people always, not always, occasionally say, "Well, why did you happen to go into the field artillery? Why did you select field artillery when your roommate Howze and most of your friends, not most of them, but a lot of your friends went into the cavalry?" And I said, "Because Howze's mother talked me into going into field artillery." Now, this is one for the books. Ham Howze's father was Chief of Cavalry at the time that we were cadets. He died in office. And Mrs. Howze used to come up, living down in Washington, quite often to see us and she always had us out for dinner. And late in our first class year, she got in a serious discussion with us about what branch we were going to take. And we were sitting there at the dinner table, at the Thayer Hotel and she said, "Now, Hamilton, you haven't told me what branch you are going in?" And he said, "Why, Mother, I'm going into the cavalry. I wouldn't do anything else. We are a cavalry family, you know that." "Well," she said, "Barksdale, what do you think you are going in?" I said, "I guess I'll go into cavalry with him, like he is going to do." She said, "I wouldn't if I were you." I said,

"What would you suggest?" And she said, "Field artillery." She said, "Now, you have the horses, but you have a progressive branch. The artillery is doing things and they are going to get better. In the cavalry they are still using sabers." And, you know, that was true. And the doggone cavalry was fighting Indians right up until World War II. They were. Whereas in the artillery, we were developing things and learning about massing fires and all this sort of thing. Now, I have nothing against cavalry, of course. The cavalry now is the armored people, but they had a lot of trouble getting them into the armor, I can tell you that. They had so many old characters that thought the only way of life was to ride a horse to war. Well, there was no place on a battlefield, the modern battlefield of World War II, for a horse. Now, we get back to West Point. Gee, I jumped from West Point clear into World War II.

INTERVIEWER: When you were branching there, the engineers always seemed to enjoy some talk of unusual prestige that maybe the other branches didn't?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, the engineers were selected from the top academic people. In other words in selecting your branch, the engineers were top choice, so you usually had the #1 man and the #2 man and all the way down to #14 or 15. I forget how many for the openings in the engineers, and they would select the engineers. That was the only branch at that time where you could get additional education. So, that was a great "plum" for the youngsters to look at going into engineering so that they could get a masters degree. And there wasn't any way that you could get a masters degree if you went into the artillery, infantry, or something else. Of course, later on this became true, too, in the chemical corps and other

tech services. But it was years before the line branches, the infantry or artillery and cavalry ever provided any additional education for officers.

INTERVIEWER: General, your class was very unique if our research is correct. You had seven full generals, eight lieutenant generals, 28 major generals and 19 brigadier generals. That's a total of 62 out of 241.

Was this because you were all so great and you all happened to come together at this time or were you . . . ?

GEN HAMLETT: I'd like to think that it was, but, actually, I don't believe that this was the basic criteria. I think it was a matter of timing and the timing that I'm talking about was World War II. World War II saw all of us become colonels and a few brigadier generals and be able to be put into positions where we had great responsibilities for young people and we did well at it because of our background. I don't think it was because we were a class set apart. It was because the timing was good insofar as we were concerned. It's something like the class of 1915. You go back and look at their records and again it's the timing that brought this out to a great degree.

INTERVIEWER: Were a lot of your classmates second generation or third generation military, or did they seem to you that just a few were what we call Army brats now?

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, there weren't too many Army brats. I see more Army brats going to the Academy now, but probably this is just a matter of numbers because there are so many bigger classes going in now than were going in in my time. Of course, the corps when I was a cadet was limited to 1200, and I think at the end of each year before the new plebes came in, it was cut

way back because the attrition was very high.

INTERVIEWER: Do you recall how many started in your class?

GEN HAMLETT: I used to know, but I don't remember. I used to know the figure, but I couldn't

INTERVIEWER: You graduated 241. Was it like 400 or twice that or half . . . ?

GEN HAMLETT: No, I'd say it was around 400. As I remember, the figure was something like that. I think we lost roughly a third of the class, about a third of the class.

INTERVIEWER: Was it more for academics or for leadership?

GEN HAMLETT: Academic. Most of the dropouts, the foundlings as they call them in the lingo, occurred before they really got into the academics to any great extent. The people who couldn't stand the pressure of the traumatic experience that we had in beast barracks. Like the Marine training today, they eliminate a heck of a lot of them in the first two weeks. And this occurred at West Point in the first six weeks. And then from then on, it was mostly academic.

INTERVIEWER: How many companies did you have?

GEN HAMLETT: A through M.

INTERVIEWER: A through M.

GEN HAMLETT: Of course, there was no J company.

INTERVIEWER: How did you spend your summers in between each one of your years?

GEN HAMLETT: The first summer between plebe year and yearling year was spent in what was known as yearling camp. It was the first classmen, seniors, and the new yearlings who had just been recognized, all moved into

summer camp which was right on the campus. And you worked out of there rather than out of barracks for military training. It was mostly military, all different types of things. Learning to take care of artillery horses and in draft and a lot of riding at that time and infantry problems. You know, a small company, squad and platoon tactics. And, of course, they had a strict guard on the camp and everybody hated to walk guard, but we all had to. That was what we did the summer. Then after the second year, you went on summer vacation. That was the year you got your summer vacation and came back as a junior. They call them cows now. That's just something that developed recently, apparently. I don't know why they call them juniors. We always called them second classmen. We did use to talk about the cows coming home but you never referred to them as cows but now they talk to you that's a cow class. You are a cow class. We always called it a second classmen, still changed over the years. That was a good long leave, nearly three months.

INTERVIEWER: Did you work or did you just relax when you came home?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, now let me see what I used to do. I worked quite a bit in the plant. I helped on press days. I ran the presses but I didn't do too much work, no. I had one very fine visit. By that time, I had another girl. She lived in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and spent two weeks up there. And, you know, I lost that girl by going up there and visiting her because her brother liked to fish. And they had a beautiful stream right . . . they had a summer place that I was visiting there. So, we spent all day fishing and I'd be so tired at night when I came home from fishing I wasn't much good for the social activities. That girl never did have much to do with me from then on. Strangely enough, she is the only one of these youngsters, you know, that I still hear from. She's married and has her second husband now, wonderful girl. And she writes to me once a year at Christmastime.

INTERVIEWER: How did you meet her?

GEN HAMLETT: I met her through George Lermond who was my roommate who was the great Olympic runner. And he had met her at the Olympic games where he had met the mother and the two sisters. The name was Jardine. Her father was in the furniture business out there. I think he was manufacturing furniture. You know, in those days a kid didn't pay much attention to what the older folks were doing, or I didn't. Very, very lovely family. But, I wasn't too good a guest, I guess, fishing all the time. I wasn't taking care of my duties and courting.

INTERVIEWER: What was the background of most of your classmates, General? Were they mostly from the city or mostly from the farms or just . . . ?

GEN HAMLETT: You couldn't say mostly from anything. They were just part of the overall cross section. So many from each state and I think one reason in those days that you didn't have as many Army brats going to West Point as you do now was because it was much more difficult in those days for them to get appointments. You see, all the appointments then were . . . the only way they could get in was through Presidential appointment or as some of them did, going in the Army. For instance, a classmate of mine named Brandt, Carl Brandt, was an Army boy and he had gone in the Army and had gotten into West Point through the Army who had some appointments then, and there were two or three others who had gone in the Army to get an appointment. The Presidential appointments were terribly competitive because there were not many of them. And as far as getting an appointment from a Congressman, that was very, very difficult for an Army lad to do that because these were political plums particularly during the Depression and everybody was looking for some way to get their children educated without

paying for it. West Point appointments were hard to come by unless you had a political pull someplace.

INTERVIEWER: I remember very well the dynamite prank you pulled as a young boy, and I also am familiar with some of the pranks that were pulled at West Point. Do you want to tell us about any of those that you were involved in there?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, I wouldn't say that I was a prankster at West Point. I had troubles enough with just getting through West Point and borrowing trouble and going out and doing things that I shouldn't be doing. Oh, I got in trouble. I spent a lot of time walking the area, but it wasn't from pranks. It was just some things that I decided to do and did that were against the regulations. Like being caught out of barracks at two o'clock in the morning one time. I had . . . was to join some people for a picnic up at Lusk Reservoir and got caught. A girl from California was waiting for me up there. Now, I had thought everything was just great. No, that was just midnight. I was caught at midnight. That got me into a lot of trouble. Then I was with a classmate, and we ran out of gas on our first class trip coming back from Baltimore. And we didn't get in until two or three o'clock in the morning and that was another bad thing. I got socked for that. Then old Nellie Richardson, the Commandant of cadets my first-class year, caught me coming across the barracks area with my foot locker being carried by two plebes. Now, this was legitimate as far as we were concerned. I was on the beast detail, but not according to the Commandant of Cadets. He claimed this was hazing. So, he put me in durance file and said he was going to see to it that I was suspended from the Academy

for hazing. He told me this. And he had an impact on my life, too, because I never liked that sort of threat and I don't think I ever made one to anyone afterwards. That's what he told me and I must say, if you are eliminated, you've had it. Well, I had a very fine tactical officer, Big Ed Timberlake. There are several Timberlakes in the Army and the Air Force. One of them retired, lives here, Ted Timberlake. He was quite a fine man. I got hold of Captain Timberlake or had somebody get in touch with him because I couldn't leave my room and tell him I needed some help. And he came over to see me and what happened fortunately, none of the young tactical officers liked this commandant. And he said, "I'll fix that." So, he went over and caught three other cadets doing the same thing, but they were the first captain, the head cadet in the class, and two battalion commanders. And so he skinned them all for the same thing. Well, this meant that if Hamlett was eliminated, they would eliminate all of their good officers. I was a supply sergeant at the time. Well, needless to say, this charge was dropped, and I was given, I think, five demerits or something like that because that's all they wanted to give these others. Here you would have ruined your whole training program by taking out the top officers. I always appreciated old Timberlake's efforts in doing that. So, I got in trouble there. It's funny when Ham Howze and I went down to see Gibner-- he was in the hospital for some reason--and we went off limits to get in the hospital. I really forget what it was all about. But, anyway, I left early and Howze was caught off limits. Howze was a lieutenant, and I was the first sergeant of B company. So, they busted old Howze and promoted me to lieutenant and he got so upset. Oh, it made Ham madder than hell.

INTERVIEWER: You were a supply sergeant and you were a first sergeant.

Did you have to go through various leadership positions or did you seek them out?

GEN HAMLETT: No, no. I would say that by my first-class year I was rather serious about military competition. As I said before, I had very little motivation for academic competition, but I was competitive so far as rank was concerned and I was appointed a supply sergeant, which was, you know, second- or third-rate type of thing and then I got busted. So, I started out from there as a private, but I really buckled down and became a model cadet, worked like hell and so forth and old Timberlake made me first sergeant of the company. I forget how I got to be first sergeant of the company. Upheaval in the hierarchy in the company. Howze was made a lieutenant at the same time. I think he was made lieutenant from supply sergeant as I remember it. And then he was busted. That lieutenant was a good job because you had a big plume on your hat and wore silk sashes and drove a platoon. This was a lot of fun. I always enjoyed that. The first sergeant's job was a hard one. I mean you had quite a responsibility in respect to assisting the tactical officer with records and leaves and all this sort of thing. And you had a company clerk who would do all the typing for you and all this sort of thing. So, I would say at that time I started seeking position. And one reason I started seeking position was because of this damn commandant who had told me I wasn't fit to be an officer.

INTERVIEWER: That was a big challenge?

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, it was. A great challenge. Maybe he did a great thing for me, I don't know. I never liked him though. I ran into him in later

life, too, and I didn't like him then. But, he was a good officer in many ways, don't get me wrong. He retired as a major general. He was trying to buck the Academy up at the time, and it needed some bucking up. It needed a little bucking up. Things had gotten, you know, how it does in any organization from time to time, and he was a thorough gentleman but lost his temper, you know. He couldn't control his temper. And he got mad at me and that's why he lost I think I told him I don't consider that I'm hazing these men. "We are all doing this and it's always been done." He said it isn't done while I'm commandant and you are not fit to be a soldier if you think this is what, you know, personal, using people as your personal servants. We had quite an argument. I don't remember much about it because I got madder than hell, and he did, too. Maybe that helped me make it.

INTERVIEWER: Were you busted as a supply sergeant after your confrontation with General Richardson?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, yes. Oh, yes, that was part of the punishment. But they didn't bust those cadet officers.

INTERVIEWER: But you learned very early that it made a lot of difference who you were and what job you had as opposed to what you were doing?

GEN HAMLETT: That's right.

INTERVIEWER: Well, out of those seven full generals who came out of your class, how would you have ranked them at the time? Would you have felt that they were destined for four stars, including yourself? Does this

GEN HAMLETT: You know you are asking a question that is very difficult to answer because none of us ever thought we would be any higher rank than a

lieutenant colonel. That was, you know, the Army was completely stagnant at that time. We weren't facing up to any war. In 1930 we were just, as I said, all lucky to have a job and \$125 a month and a place to sleep and this was great because not many people So, we didn't, I don't remember ever contemplating who would be the big wheels. You naturally thought at the time that the cadet officers who had been selected through a good process of selection would be very high ranking. And as a matter of fact, most of them were successful. Now, the first captain in my class became a three-star general in the Air Force. Norstad was the corps adjutant at this time, so he went up. Gosh, I wish I had a picture of my class. I'd look some of these up. The battalion commander, though, who I would say better than half of the class considered as being the top man in the class was retired as a colonel. And we talk about this even now. I was talking to a classmate not long ago--what in the world happened here. And the only thing I can say is that he just didn't get the breaks because he was a good officer. I mean it wasn't the matter of drinking or women or anything else. He was a good officer with a fine family and very highly thought of. He just didn't get the breaks. He didn't get the job. He didn't get the people pushing him or the challenge that it takes to get ahead. I wouldn't want to say that looking at that list you got, I could name you some that I never thought would be four-star generals, even after they became two-star generals, but that's something else. And I'm sure that there is not one man in my class who ever thought Hamlett would be a four-star general, I can assure you, because I was never up in the hierarchy of cadet command and that sort of thing.

INTERVIEWER: Did you detect any . . . was there right from the beginning a great competition for those positions among the cadets, or did they just kind fall in them and assume their duties?

GEN HAMLETT: There wasn't . . . no, I wouldn't say there was a great deal of competition for them. We had a system of peer evaluation even then, and there was very little argument about these jobs and to whom they went. Ralph Swofford who was selected as our first captain, I think would have been elected first captain by the class. He was a good deal older than the rest of us. He had had four years of college and was just a superior person. And I really do, I think if you had taken a vote of the class, we would have elected him to first captain. Quite often you found the same thing, company captains were very popular even though they did things that would make them unpopular.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have any cadets that got in trouble in such a way that they were given the silent treatment? Did you have any situations like that?

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, yes, there were some. I happened to be one of the first classmen on the honor committee and this was a very nice accolade from your classmates because this wasn't elected thing, and I was very proud of being a member of the honor committee, who judicated some of this. However, the muscle behind the honor committee was, of course, will the commandant and the superintendent back you up if you come up with these things? I don't think that we ever had to silence anyone. I know we didn't when I was a first classmen, although we had several cases where we told the fellow to make, to turn in his resignation. We had one, however, and this was one of

the most ticklish ones that we had to handle and this was the case of Red Cagle, the great football player, who went off on Christmas leave his first-class year and got married and came back and was accused by the commandant's office of having signed the paper saying that he was not married; because when you came back, you had to sign a paper each time. And he was almost summarily cashiered from the corps of cadets. Well, we had gotten into this, the honor committee, and we found out that Red hadn't signed it. He had just failed to sign it. He just didn't sign it. And in the excitement of returning cadets from Christmas leave, this was overlooked. So, we as a committee went up to see the superintendent about this and demanded that based on our judgment of this whole case, that we wanted to know where he got his information that Cagle had falsified his return. And I must say that the superintendent, William E. Smith, at the time, a fine old man, listened to us and went to talk to us about the whole case and said he didn't intend to take him to trial or anything else, but based on the fact that he was now married, he couldn't remain as a cadet. There was no way that he could be accepted as a cadet and he would have to resign from the Academy, but it would not be under the stigma of having violated his honor. That's the way it occurred.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have a requirement to stay in the Army if you quit West Point at that time if you finished two years?

GEN HAMLETT: I don't remember. I'm not sure but I don't think so, though. We didn't have all the laws and whatnot having to do . . . (telephone rings). Well, this was, this case of Cagle that I was talking about was one that reached the national press. I mean, having been the great All-American

football player, here was something that made news and it was quite an experience for these youngsters to get into this sort of a thing. But old Cagle was a very fine person. He had an awful lot of trouble. Though he was a college graduate, he had been to Southwestern Louisiana State, I think it was and had been a good football player down in that conference and came to West Point and was a great athlete, but a very poor student. And in those days we had a coaching system for any of the bad students on the football team and this was a volunteer thing that people went into, and Cagle had his coach for four years. His academic coach as well as his football coach, a fellow named Herbert in my class, great person. I see him at class reunions and whatnot. He was an engineer. Got out of the Army right after World War II, went into the wine business. He owned a big wine outfit, and he's made several million dollars.

INTERVIEWER: Do you have any other classmates that didn't achieve the rank of general or did get out that made significant contributions to the country that you can think of offhand?

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, there were two or three of them, and gosh, I can't remember their names. One was--I believe was a classmate of mine --in the State Department--was Byrode. I think he came in with us and then got out. And there was another fellow that I never knew who became the editor of the Washington Post. Now, what was his name? I don't remember. But other classmates knew him quite well and used to talk about him. He was very successful in journalism.

INTERVIEWER: Was he graduated and then got out?

GEN HAMLETT: No, no. He got out during the plebe years, I remember.

INTERVIEWER: General, when you were commissioned out of West Point, what was your understanding of how long you would be in grade? You said you could probably make lieutenant colonel in about 20 to 30 years? How long did you expect to be a lieutenant?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, we were associated with instructors who had been lieutenants since World War I. In other words, they had been lieutenants since they had graduated in 1918. One of them was Willie Palmer. I remember Willie Palmer was a flashy young first lieutenant who had graduated in November. George Keiser of '18. George Keiser was another and these people later became good friends of mine and whatnot. So, our expectations of promotion as I say were very nebulous and anyway you could figure what was going to happen to this class, you couldn't possibly see anything better than a lieutenant colonelcy in the future. You know, there wasn't much hope for promotion. And this crowd of lieutenants, like Palmer and Hasbrouck that you talked to last night, starting from the class of November '18, were not promoted to captains after World War I. They stayed 2d lieutenants for 17 years. Now, I was lucky. I was lieutenant for only ten years. And when all these people--and we talked about this yesterday--when all these people were promoted automatically at the end of ten years, so was I. I became a captain after ten years of service along with the 17--I believe the longest one was 17 years and 9 months, something like that. And that was the class of Gruenther and some of those people, I'm not exactly sure. Max Taylor--no, I'm not sure about Max--I think he was promoted before, and I don't know why.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have any individuals in your class who you looked on

as a model for your professional career, or maybe a conglomeration of two or three that you emulated.

GEN HAMLETT: I think you always have admiration for certain people that you are associated with, and I would say that one person in the Army, which, who was my model was General Leslie J. McNair. McNair was a great person. I was his aide when he was brigadier general down in the 2nd Division in San Antonio. Though I didn't work at being an aide, I was a week-end aide. He was a man who understood that young people had monetary problems and he always wanted to have two lieutenants as his aides because that gave you twelve extra dollars a month. And that twelve dollars during the 30s a month was nice money. And so he always appointed two junior aides in order that someone would get this money, but he did have you do enough work so that it didn't hurt his conscience. So, we were week-end aides, really. And at the time I was there and later on you may want me to talk about my younger days in the military, I became a regimental adjutant as a lieutenant and, boy, this was unheard of. And it was a tough job. The adjutant ran the regiment, and I was McNair's aide and regimental adjutant at the same time. I always admired him very much. Another man I admired a great deal, and I knew him as a cadet because he was one of our instructors, and I thought he was one of the finest people and still do, was Clovis Byers. He was assistant to the Master of the Sword in my first-class year but became Master of the Sword at West Point, the man in charge of all the intramural athletic programs and the gymnastic work there at the Academy. And he became a corps commander. Very brave man, very kind man, and a typical person that you wanted to say, "There is the most moral, best man

I've ever known in my life," and I'd say Clovis Byers. And we were friends all of our lives. I saw him a lot, you know, during my service though he was in the cavalry, and I was in the field artillery on the staff down at Fort Sam Houston when I was there in the artillery and that sort of thing. And he was a corps commander over in the Far East when I was the DivArty commander in his corps. Those are two great people. There have been others, of course. George Kyser, who was the director of gunnery when I first went to Fort Sill as a gunnery instructor. Not when I first went there, H. L. C. Jones was director of gunnery when I first went to the gunnery department. He became a major general during World War II, retired, and I think he is long gone. There are always people you find in your life that you've had an admiration for. I must say that I had an admiration for people who also had feet of clay and though you knew it, you still thought they were great because they were capable of doing great things at times.

INTERVIEWER: Who were some of these people?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, MacArthur was one. I could really tell you about that. There was a man who could just charm the birds out of the trees, a great personality. And yet, one of the most egotistical men I've ever known. He really thought he was next to God. People used to talk about it, but he thought that. I can remember at the headquarters out there when down in the staff, we would never start work on a reply from Washington until we found out whether MacArthur really wanted to answer a dispatch or not from the Joint Chiefs, and very often he'd say, "Oh, hell," you see, we never talked to him; the Chief of Staff would; he would come out there and he'd say, "Put that one aside. We won't answer that." And these were things that demanded

an answer. He wouldn't answer them.

INTERVIEWER: How about some of your TACs? You mentioned one that bailed you out of a little . . . ?

GEN HAMLETT: Timberlake. Old Timberlake was . . . he had a good record in World War II. I don't know whether he retired as a brigadier general or major general.

INTERVIEWER: Was there any other TACs there that influenced you similarly or . . . ?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, I can't think of any that I had any great feeling for. At that time you didn't get to know officers as a cadet. I never, as a cadet, was never inside an officer's home. I had no idea how officers lived or anything about it. I knew one or two of the officers' wives. I knew Mrs. Jones, Biff Jones' wife because I was walking up to the Dellafield Pond one day, and a wham on the back of the head and I went down on my knees and I turned around and there was Biff's maybe six- or eight-year old kid with a big stick in his hand. He just knocked me down. He had hit me so hard, and I just reached out and I grabbed him and I put him across my knee and just beat the hell out of him, paddled him and Mrs. Jones was . . . I looked up and she said, "That's right, Mr. Hamlett. I'm glad you are doing it because I would have. Hit him good." He is a major general now. I think he is a major general. He was doing real well. Biff Jones' son. No, we had good officers there, tactical officers. Some of them were good and some of them were bad. You hear all kinds of tales and a lot of them are true. Willie Palmer was TAC there at the time. He had a terrible reputation there among the cadets. I knew Willie later out in Hawaii when

we were lieutenants together out there, and we became good friends. Willie was always a martinet type who was difficult to get along with, but I got along with him all right.

INTERVIEWER: Is Willie Palmer, Bruce Palmer?

GEN HAMLETT: No, no, Willie Palmer and Charlie Palmer are two brothers who were much older than Bruce Palmer. Willie was the class of November '18 and Charlie was . . . what class was Charlie? I guess '24 or '25 somewhere in there. They both became, these two brothers, became four-star generals. Willie never married. He was a bachelor and Charlie never married until very late in life. I say late, I think he was 40- or 45-years old. And, well, hell, it was after World War II that Charlie was married. He must have been nearly 50 and we used to kid Willie about it and he'd get mad. He was Deputy Chief of Staff of Logistics at the time. He told us to shut up about him. Another man that I had a great deal of respect for and still do who was also an English instructor when I was a cadet and we became very, very close friends in later life was Frank Farrell. Farrell retired as a lieutenant general, lives in Washington. I still see him when I go down there. He is a very brilliant person, taught me an awful lot about writing. I was under him as an instructor when I first went to Fort Sill as a gunnery instructor. He had our division. And though I learned a lot about spelling working in the Adair County News, I didn't learn everything but old Frank had. He would always catch me on misspelled words and laugh at it. He made one remark one time. I'll never forget it because it's so true. I came in and in great disgust I said, "I don't know how this section I have, some of them with masters degrees, supposed to be reasonably

intelligent could be so damn dumb." He said, "Ham, there is one thing you can never underestimate." And I said, "No, what?" He said, "The average intelligence." Ain't that a good remark? You can never underestimate the average intelligence.

INTERVIEWER: General Hamlett, before lunch we were discussing your periods at West Point and one of the things you stated that you would like to talk about when we broke for lunch was some of the West Point traditions and how they were then and how you see them now, and maybe you'd like to discuss education in general, specifically dealing with West Point as far as you can and if you want to get off that, of course, that's up to you. But

GEN HAMLETT: Well, I won't bore you with some of the things that I talk about when I'm out on the road and making talks to people about West Point. But I have one set piece that I give, and I'm going to give it again now in March at the Founders Day banquet up in Columbia, South Carolina. I've been invited to be the guest speaker and it has to do with West Point and the citizen soldier. And actually, West Point generated the whole citizen soldier program through one of its graduates, Alden Partridge, who you may have heard about in history as being the fellow who crossed sabers with Thayer at West Point and was relieved and kicked out of the Army. It's an interesting story, and he was a great educator, really. I have to say this, of course, because he founded Norwich University and I was one of the presidents as he was of Norwich University. But, getting back to West Point, West Point to any graduate holds a real place in your heart. I mean the experience at West Point is something that no one can ever forget. I mean it's so much more lasting in my opinion than the experience you have

in a civilian school because of many things. One is a very tough academic program that they have there plus the other things that you have to do which are in competition with academics and there is really not much time to do anything but be a cadet. There's not much free time at West Point even now because I still get complaints from graduates. There are all kinds of theories about West Point and now that West Point is becoming coed, you can hear the old grads really blowing their top because as all of us have said for years and years, the place is really going to hell now. Frankly, I don't think this is going to make a great deal of difference in our modern society because the whole scheme of things in respect to men and women is changing worldwide. I don't know whether it's for the good or not, but here it is. Here it is. We have to face up to it. The law has been passed and all I can say to these people that are griping about it, "Let's quit griping and do the best we can with what we have." Because that's what we are going to have to do. Now, I can speak very glibly about this because I'm the guy that made Norwich University a coed institution. I caught hell from a lot of the graduates about this, too. But, in my opinion it saved the school and in the opinion of many of the Board of Trustees, that's true, too. West Point in my time, of course, was a small school under 1200. You knew everyone in your class and most of the cadets in the upper classes. You had a great deal of, I would think, you had more friends and more associations with more people at West Point in that day than they possibly can have today. Where the classes that enter West Point now are as large as a corps of cadets used to be when I was a cadet. This is a trend towards what I call "the numbers racket" in colleges where

you are not a name anymore, you are a number. And I've deplored quite often in talking with people about big universities which are necessary and we have to have them, that in undergraduate work it's very difficult for a kid to be just a number at age 18 rather than to be somebody with a name and friends and whatnot. So, today we see West Point and the other two academies becoming universities in a sense in that they are large. Though compared to universities they are not large. What is it--the legal size of West Point? 4800, I believe, brought about by the way of President Kennedy. He was the one that made the decision as the President and ordered the expansion of West Point and the Air Force Academy to the same size as the legal limit for the nest

THIS RECORDING IS IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE US ARMY MILITARY HISTORY RESEARCH COLLECTION SENIOR OFFICERS ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM. THE SENIOR OFFICER BEING INTERVIEWED IS GENERAL BARKSDALE HAMLETT. THE INTERVIEWERS ARE COLONEL JOHN J. RIDGWAY AND LIEUTENANT COLONEL(P) PAUL B. WALTER, BOTH FROM THE US ARMY WAR COLLEGE CLASS OF 1976. TODAY'S DATE IS 23 JANUARY 1976. WE ARE AT THE PORT ROYAL PLANTATION INN NEAR GENERAL HAMLETT'S HOME. THIS IS INTERVIEW NUMBER TWO, REEL NUMBER TWO, AND IS A CONTINUATION OF THE SESSION ON REEL NUMBER ONE, DEALING WITH GENERAL BARKSDALE HAMLETT'S PERIOD AT WEST POINT. RECORDER SET TO ZERO NOW.

INTERVIEWER: General Hamlett, we left off on the other reel with you discussing West Point as you see it today and saw it at the time that you were in school. Would you care to continue?

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, I was saying that the enlargement of West Point was brought about by direct order to the Department, through the Secretary of Defense, of course, to enlarge the Air Force Academy and West Point to be the same size as Annapolis. Annapolis has always been larger because they've never had the ROTC program that the Army has supported for years, well, since the beginning of World War . . . when did it start? Back in 1916, I think,

didn't it? They've never had the source of officer material that the Army has had so they've had to educate most of their officers at Annapolis, because of the peculiar duties that are incumbent upon a Naval officer-- navigation and leadership and all those things that have to do with going to sea and big ships, which is not quite the same as being a soldier on land. I, for one, was skeptical at the time this was done, though most of the graduates thought this was a great thing because it would give you a better football team. Actually, this has not proved to be true. (Laughter) If anything, the football teams have deteriorated with the increase in the size of the Academy, but this is another problem. My skepticism was based really on the fact that by increasing the size of the Military Academy you're going to decrease the importance, in a way, of the ROTC program in that so many of these young officers are trained to be officers coming out of our schools and aren't going to have a place. And you'll get a feel, and I think this is true now. Fewer and fewer of them becoming involved as Regular Army officers and going on to put into the Army those things, which, I think, are needed in our thinking in the Army. Coming from a source other than West Point, from a source other than a purely Military Academy, so that the mixture of thinking and philosophy and whatnot in my opinion is sounder when you have a mixture of West Point graduates and graduates from civilian schools throughout the country. That was one of the reasons that I've thought that increasing the size of West Point to, I think it's now 4800, could prove not too beneficial to the Army. The other, of course, is the lack that you get in a larger school of comraderie and association with more and more people and the different classes and so forth. I

wouldn't say that West Point at 1200 was turning out a better product than West Point at 4800. I don't think there's any way to document this, and I certainly wouldn't attempt to. I know that West Point, as I have seen it from time to time on visits and discussions with officers there and cadets at West Point, is still a very fine military college and it's still turning out a very fine type of young man who's taking their place in the military. I note that many more of them are getting out of the military service at this point in the history of our country than the percentage it was when we graduated. That, too, is an odious comparison because we had nothing else to do. It was during the Depression, and as I say, that salary of a second lieutenant was quite a stipend in those days when nobody could get jobs. So, these people were able to go into other fields, but here, again, the background and training at West Point isn't wasted because it's a good educational institution. And I think many graduates of West Point have made their place in society, not just in the military, but in other walks of life--doctors, lawyers, bankers, and so forth. I just question the real value of increasing the size of West Point over about 2400 cadets. I would rather see it at that size than twice that size. This was the point I was making. I thought that West Point, when I was a cadet, certainly provided me with a very fine education. It was always referred to, you know, when you got out and in discussions with the Ivy Leaguers and other people as a trade school, and it's still referred to in many circles as a trade school. But I'll say this about West Point, then and now, the subjects that you studied when you got through, you knew what you'd been studying because you had to know or you

wouldn't stay in there. There was never any question about that in the minds of people that went there. Now maybe it wasn't taught according to some of the trends in higher education today, and some of those trends seem mighty poor. I deplore some of them. I think that West Point is still holding to the traditions of up there--daily quizzes, weekly grades and that sort of thing. Force a young man to really know what he's talking about in the subjects he's studying. Well, I don't think there's much more that I could say about West Point. Do you have any questions on it?

INTERVIEWER: Well, I just thought maybe you might want to talk about the effectiveness of character building that West Point has? How do you feel about that?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, I've always felt that West Point with its slogan of Duty, Honor, Country was way ahead of other institutions that I have been acquainted with that didn't have the same type of feeling about our country, patriotism, and honor, and duty, and so forth. I think it's far ahead in character building than other schools. I think that the military colleges that are left in this country today are very close to West Point along these lines. The Citadel, here in our own state of South Carolina, Virginia Military Institute, Norwich University, these schools have provided a great character building influence, and they've provided some very fine military people, officers, in their time.

INTERVIEWER: Mylander in the book The Generals gives the impression that West Point officers have an inside track on becoming a general. What are your feelings on that?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, I've faced this, of course, all my life. I remember one instance of this. Herb Powell at the time was the Vice Chief of Staff for Personnel, G-1 if you will, appearing before a Congressional committee, and one of the committee--and I wouldn't know who it was, I wouldn't mention names--said, "Well, General Powell, of course, you're talking about West Point now. You West Pointers have a society for protecting each other. You're a big three-star general, and if you weren't a West Point graduate, you couldn't talk like this." And Powell looked him straight in the eye and he said, "Mr. Whateverhisnamewas, I'm not a graduate of West Point. I came in the Army through the ROTC program. I graduated from some school out in the midwest." (I forget the name of it.) "And you're talking to the wrong fellow when you talk about the West Point Protection Association because I've never seen any indication of it in all my years as a commissioned officer." So, I think this is a lot of hooley, this West Point Protection Association. Naturally, a West Pointer, graduating and going into the service will have more friends and know more people from his association at West Point with officers and other cadets than the young man coming out of some, like Powell, some midwestern school, who may have three or four other people in the whole military service that he knows. And it takes him a lot longer and he probably has to work harder at making his place through friends and acquaintances and whatnot. I think this is a criteria, but look today at the people who are holding high rank in the Army, and our Chief of Staff today is not a West Point graduate, a very fine officer, knew him very well. He was with me in Berlin. I brought him to Berlin when I was there. I had many others throughout this past 20 years

who have gone to the top of the Army who are not West Point graduates. And I think this is indicative of the point that anyone who has the background, I mean, the will to do and competitive spirit and motivation can go just as far in the Army as a West Point graduate.

INTERVIEWER: Did you meet your wife at West Point?

GEN HAMLETT: No, no. I met her when I was a lieutenant down in San Antonio, Texas. Funny thing, she was born in Kentucky, Bowling Green, Kentucky, close to my birth place in Hopkinsville. And her family and my family knew each other but I didn't meet her till I went to San Antonio as a second lieutenant and joined the 2nd Division down there.

INTERVIEWER: Given the opportunity again, would you do anything differently so far as West Point was? Would you still aspire to go to West Point and if so, would you still pick field artillery?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, going back to what I told you before, I was going to the Naval Academy, but certain circumstances changed that and I went to West Point. I would say nothing would change my feeling today about going to the Naval Academy or West Point, but I'm really glad that I went to West Point. I think my career in the Army to me has been much more satisfactory than it might have been in the Navy, or what I should have done. But I wouldn't change a thing and if I had my life to do over again, I'd go right back that same way I started out.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, do you have anything else that you would like to add to what we've talking about during your period of early boyhood days to the time that you graduated from West Point and became a field artilleryman?

GEN HAMLETT: No, I don't think there's anything else. I'll probably think

of things in the next few weeks. If I do, you'll come back and we'll talk about them some other day.

INTERVIEWER: All right, sir, very fine. This completes the interview number one on the early childhood and the West Point days of General Barksdale Hamlett.

SECTION 2

THIS IS THE PERIOD OF GENERAL BARKSDALE HAMLETT'S LIFE FROM 1930 to 1942, GENERALLY. THIS IS TAPE TWO, INTERVIEW TWO, DATE IS 23 JANUARY 1976. INTERVIEWERS ARE COLONEL RIDGWAY AND LIEUTENANT COLONEL WALTERS.

INTERVIEWER: General, would you like to tell us about your very first assignment after you were commissioned from West Point in 1930? I assume you had some leave when you left West Point; how was it checking into your first duty? Station?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, yes, in those days you got 90 days leave after graduation before reporting to your first station. And it was always exciting to put in your preference for a station when you really didn't know much about it. And then to get your assignment and be on your way. I was fortunate in having a lieutenant at West Point, Rex Chandler, who was a very good friend of mine in that my first class year, I ruptured the muscles in my leg and was unable to play LaCross so I was made Assistant LaCross Coach of the Plebe team under Chandler and having him, that was in the spring, to discuss these things with and what I would do, and he was an artilleryman, by the way. He said, "What you ought to do on your first assignment is to ask for Fort Sam Houston, Texas. Down there they have the best artillery set up that I know of, and it's part of a division, which will give you good training down there, with combined arms, and not only that, that town is just full of beautiful girls. And sure as the world, if you go down there, if you go down there, you're going to fall in love with one of those San Antonio girls and marry her, just like I did." So I took Rex Chandler's advice and put in for Fort Sam Houston, Texas as my first choice and lo, and behold, I got it, and

was ordered to report to Fort Sam Houston, I believe it was the 5th of September 1930. Well, I told you about buying my little Ford automobile, and I got in my little Ford automobile and headed for Texas, now this was the longest trip, except for the one with the Corps cadets out to Chicago, that I'd ever made in my life. And I had a few friends along the way. I stopped down in Tennessee and picked up a classmate of mine, Casey Odom. Casey became an Air Force general, he was one of those major generals you cited, retired, living in Tennessee now, on a farm there. Well, Casey and I made the rest of the trip together, into Texas, and stopped at Fort Worth to spend the night with another very close friend of mine who's remained so through the years, who was also reporting down to the 2nd Division in San Antonio, Texas. Thomas "Tommie" Dunn, Tommie retired as a three star general. And then we proceeded on to Fort Sam Houston together. Casey, though, was going to Brooks Field for air training. That, by the way was before Randolph Field had opened at the basic training place.. There were two basic training stations then, one at March Field in California, the other is Brooks Field in San Antonio, so Casey didn't go into the 2nd Division with us, he went on to the Air Training Center there. But Tommie and I reported together to the 12th Field Artillery on the 5th day of September and I believe that was the day 1930 in our brand new boots and pink trousers and tight fitting officerstunics, which, thank God, had just a few years before, had done away with the upright collar, which all cadets at West Point are real sick of by the time they graduated, and you wore a shirt and necktie.

We reported to the adjutant of the regiment, Captain Charles Lanier, who later became a brigadier general in the Quartermaster Corps during WWII. He was a very fine fellow and a fine officer. The commanding officer at that time of the 12th Field Artillery, was a very fine colonel, names, and I'll have to give you this name later, I can't think of him now and I don't want to break time out. Remember - I'll give it to you. And the Executive Officer was a lieutenant colonel named Cliff Norton, known to his compariots as Skipper Norton. And Skipper also had no wife, though he had one somewhere, she wasn't with him at Fort Sam Houston, and he lived in the Bachelor Billets there, or next door to it, but he was the President of our mess. And didn't complain very often about the noise we made. I do remember one morning when we came into breakfast and Bill Connolly, by the way, he's a cousin of this big shot politician from Texas, had a little fisty rat terrier dog that he picked up someplace and old Cliff Norton looked down the table and said, "Mr. Connolly, I wish you'd keep that damn dog of yours quiet for a few nights. He kept me awake all last night." Well, we immediately knew what he was talking about, because we had had a party at Connolly's quarters which was right next to the old man. But he never, that old fellow never did use some of the things that he could have to get us in trouble. He'd straighten us out, but he did it his way and not through any sort of military discipline. We had a great respect for him, and he taught us an awful lot about etiquette and when we should call on people and who we should call on, and what cards we should leave and this sort of business,

which we could read in the manual but he also checked on us to see if we knew all these things before we started becoming involved with the calls we had to make. Which was very serious in those days my friend. You better call on your commanding officer and the next in line, and the Commander of the Division within the first 24 hours. Well, funny thing, I remember all the newcomers, there were 5 of us. Bob Booth, was among them. I forget just who. Dunn, and one of our Siamese classmates, Moon Sundansna was another one. We all made these calls together. All 5 of us and we'd thank God if they weren't at home. We'd drop our cards and run. We did this on the Brigade Commander, General Rauchenbach. We got a call the next morning that Mrs. Rauchenbach wanted to see the 5 lieutenants from the 12th Field Artillery at 8:00 the next night and boy, we were there, I want to tell you. Mrs. Rauchenbach, she was a real wheel. She raked us up good. For dropping those cards! She said, "You ought to try the second time before you just drop your cards, and think that's all there is to calling on us." She was a great old lady. Fine horsewoman. I was assigned to C Battery of the 12th Field Artillery. Our equipment, of course, this was horse drawn, not horse, but horse drawn artillery. You know the difference, don't you? The cannoneers rode on the caissons on the horse-drawn, and they rode on horses in horse artillery, C Battery was commanded by Captain Eddie O'Hara, a WWI product and a real character. It was said, and I never saw them, that he carried in one hip pocket a paper that said he was absolutely sane and in the other hip pocket he carried a piece of paper that declared him insane.

I never was sure which was right. (Laughter) He had two lieutenants in the battery, Hamlett, there were three I mean, Hamlett, Hatton, and Hayden. The three H's. Hamlett, Hatton and Hayden. Hatton was the senior. He was class of '29, he'd been there a year and after signing Hayden was the other one of the five I was talking about, to the battery, why, they sent Hatton down to another battery that didn't have any lieutenant in it. So, we, Hayden and I, were left there with Eddie O'Hara, and we reported to the Battery, in the field. Now, this is an experience, to report, Camp Stanley it was called in those days, an old wartime cantonment out there that we were living in, and there were the wartime barracks for the battery, but you were in the field at daylight every morning, going out to the firing point. That's where we did our firing then, and our equipment, as I said, horse-drawn, French 75's. Now, we had had some little experience at the Academy, but as I remember we had had the American 75, and this was brand new to us and we didn't know much about it. But the first day I was sent down to put the battery into position and lay the battery, and gentlemen, I didn't know straight up about doing either. But, in those days, you had professional non-commissioned officers and all of the sergeants in that battery had been through WWI, and most of them in C Battery of the 12th Field Artillery. They were still with the Battery and this was 1930, so mind you they were an old crew, had been in that battery for 12 years. They had come from the old 3rd Field Artillery, and they used to tell some real stories about that. Our 1st sergeant just took over. He knew I didn't know how to lay a battery. He got the battery into position, laid the guns and taught me

how to use a French aiming circle, right there the first day. And I never have had such wonderful treatment in my life as was administered to me by the old professional non-coms in C Battery of the 12th Field Artillery. It's a period that I'll never forget. Those old pros taking this young lieutenant and they knew you didn't know anything, but they never made a point of this. They always talked to you like you knew 10 times as much about this as they did, but that they had a suggestion that they wanted to add to your deep knowledge of this subject. (Laughter) The suggestion they had was what you should do next. What command you should give next. And this was really great. Our 1st sergeant was named Jimmie Braut. Now Jimmie Braut was a very famous character in the whole Army at that time. He'd been the star pitcher on the winning baseball team over in Germany and had been given a professional contract, an offer, by the New York Yankees they tried to get him to join. He was a left-handed pitcher. He'd throw the darndest curve ball, even then, that you had ever saw, and was still pitching. Still great, and I asked Jimmy after we got to know each other and whatnot, and I could talk to him about things like this, "Why didn't you go into professional baseball? You know, everybody that I've ever talked says you were good enough. You would have been a great pitcher in the big leagues." He said, "I'll tell you what. First thing was, I am an Irishman and I have a great love for liquor and women. That was very bad if you got out and started making a lot of money, I knew I wouldn't be worth a damn in a few years. I just couldn't face up to that and leaving my first love which was the

military. I've stayed in the Army and I'm happy, my life's been good, and I hope yours will be, too, Lieutenant." I've always remembered Jim, he just couldn't face up to live a straight life and amount to anything if he was making a lot of money. Sort of like that fellow Hasbrook we were talking about last night, who didn't want to be promoted to major, because if he made all that money when he got back to civil life, his wife would expect him to make it teaching, and he knew he couldn't. Well, that was a great experience, I spent in that battery because Eddie let me run the battery. Hayden was junior to me and soon after we got there he became involved with the battalion headquarters and was transferred. So, I was left as the only lieutenant in the battery, and I ran the battery. I learned how to command a battery when I was 21 years old. Commanded, because I was watched very carefully, not by my captain, he gave me some good points from time to time, but by the non-coms in the battery. And there was a great deal of feeling in the battery against the battery commander. The non-coms didn't like him because he was an inefficient officer, and they were efficient non-commissioned officers. Eddie was a very nice person. A great fellow. Very straight-laced man. He was a very religious person, had a wonderful wife. But he was just too flighty and willy-nilly to really face up to the responsibilities of taking command of this battery. He never commanded it, the 1st sergeant and I commanded the battery. And that taught me an awful lot about leadership.

INTERVIEWER: You were really permitted to make a lot of mistakes, then, weren't you?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, yeah, I made lots of mistakes. Plenty of mistakes.

But those non-coms, they'd always dredge me out, you know. And teach me what the thing to do was. Now this was purely military. I mean the other side of your life was after hours when you took up your social activities, and boy, that was a great time in San Antonio. This was a wonderful little country town in those days and you got to know a lot of people, and you, as a young officer, were invited out to, you know, to associate with the Country Club crowd and this sort of thing. A little hard on your finances, but then we were always in debt, as bachelor officers, but that was all right, you were supposed to be. That's where I met my wife, on a party that Cliff Norton had organized called a "Paper Chase" where you rode horses and went from place to place and finally wound up where the treasure was and we'd have refreshments. Talking about prohibition days, of course, that was in prohibition days, and the only good thing about it was that you could buy a quart of whiskey for a dollar. And if you knew where to get it, who was making it, and of course, as young officers, we found out very soon where we could do that, you could get good whiskey for a dollar a quart. As a matter of fact, I became a very good friend of my bootlegger. Called him "One-eyed Marshall", he was an old one-eyed fellow and he had a kennel full of good bird dogs. And Marshall and I used to hunt together. He got into a lot of trouble later, he killed somebody down there, I think he wound up in the Penitentiary, but he never, he was always very, very circumspect with me in every way. He had been a soldier, had been a corporal in WWI. That's where he lost his eye. It had been shot out in combat in Germany. We had that old equip-

ment, and I'll tell you it was a real chore keeping it together, and of course you spent 9/10's of your time taking care of the horses and that's where I learned at an early age that this horse business was for the birds. If you could do it some other way. The horses weren't the answer. And, I was sure glad that I hadn't gone into the Cavalry because artillerymen were already thinking about getting rid of the horse. As a matter of fact, the first truck drawn outfit was set up, I think, in '31, '30 or '31, the first Field Artillery at Fort Sill. And when I went to Fort Sill after my tour in Hawaii, which I'll tell you about after we get through with Fort Sam Houston, I was assigned to the 18th Field Artillery with the trucks. And I became very interested in that at a very early age. Well, let's get back to that time in San Antonio because that's where I met my wife, on that "Paper Chase", my future wife. And we got "that way" about each other as they say, and she was, when I met her she was 18, her mother insisted that she was too young to marry, we kept pestering her, and she finally gave her consent the next year, and we were married on the 15th of December 1931. Now, this is something that still makes her mad when I talk about it, but it's amusing, you ought to hear a few little amusing things. We were discussing what we'd do right after the wedding. She said, "Well, where are we going on our honeymoon?" I said, "Well, we can't possibly go on a honeymoon." She said, "Well, we can borrow some money and go." I said, it's not a matter of money, don't you realize this is right in the middle of quail season." (Laughter) She's taken me to task ever since then, but I had two good bird dogs and

a lot of good shooting. I said, 'Well, we'll take a honeymoon later, which we did.' We went out to Hawaii, under orders, (Laughter) but that was our honeymoon.

INTERVIEWER: General, did you ever have a battery test?

GEN HAMLETT: No, they had yearly inspection when you went to, it wasn't a test though, it wasn't competitive, unless you qualified for what was known as the "Knox Trophy." Now, the Knox Trophy was a test, it was an inspection test. And your grades were compiled and the Knox Trophy battery in the next brigade. For instance, we had two regiments to support Fort Sam Houston, so at the yearly inspection, the battery that got the best grade, in the 12th Field Artillery would be competing with the 15th Field Artillery within the brigade, as to who was the Knox Trophy Battery and then you would go out and shoot certain problems. It was sort of like the tests that we had later, but it wasn't the rigmarole that everybody had to go through every year. You were selected sort of from inspection and then you went into this testing business and I'll tell you later I was in a Knox Trophy Battery, under a very fine Battery Commander, when I was a 2nd lieutenant out in Hawaii. I'll get to that later when I talk about the Hawaiian experience because this is quite different. It was a tractor drawn outfit and the 155 millimeter, the old GPF Howitzer Outfit in Hawaii. 11th Field Artillery. But the 12th Field Artillery was where I started out and where I learned a lot of things, how to do them, and how not to do them. And I'll never forget the experience and particularly the rapport that existed between the young officers and the non-commissioned officers. You had to get things done and in spite of a lot, not a lot,

but a number of very mediocre officers left over from WWI. And they were mediocre. And there wasn't any way at that time that you could get rid of these guys except by court martial. They hadn't even started the class B system, which came in later where you could cause them, to show cause why he shouldn't be eliminated, and bring up all these things. You could get away with murder in those days, a lot of these officers never even went down to the Battery in the daytime. You wouldn't see them around there for 2 or 3 days. There were officers that I have seen stay drunk for a week. Never do a lick of duty, nobody even ever reported them. We had a little different situation in the battalion that I was in because we had a very good battalion commander. A man named Pollin, George Pollin. He was a good officer and he made them, in his battalion, they either came down to work, or you know, they were somewhere in evidence. Old O'Hara, he never took a drink in his life, that I know of, never saw him. That wasn't his problem. His problem was flitting around. You know, he always had some project. . . Building a new wash basin in the battery mess, or some silly damn thing instead of running the battery.

INTERVIEWER: General, it's been said that rank among lieutenants is like virtue among ladies of the night. What is your feeling on that? In those early days was there a very distinct separation by date of rank or file number or . . . ?

GEN HAMLETT: No, no, not among my classmates and people like that. You tried to get along. You didn't show that little bit of rank. The 1st lieutenants, as far as we were concerned, they were it. We did what the hell they told us to do. And they were the upper classmen, you know. And most of them were much older than we were, because you didn't get to be, it took you 7 years to get to be a 1st lieutenant. They changed

that law. Actually, I was a first lieutenant after 5 years, because the law had changed then. They changed this thing to a captain to 10 years. But, no, we didn't . . . I never had but one instance of it, and I'll tell you this. Of a matter of rank among lieutenants. My second year there, Hayden had gone to the Battalion Headquarters and I was the only officer in the battery and they assigned a graduate of the class of 1931 to C Battery, 12th Field Artillery. He was a good enough fellow and all that, but lazier than hell. And it was hard to get him up in the morning. And, I kept telling him, "Look, you're not doing your part down here. It takes two of us and you've got to learn some of these things, too, which you're not doing." And he'd laugh. "Oh, I'll get there." I'd known him as a cadet. "Don't worry about it," and so forth. I put up with that for about 2 or 3 weeks, and I could see that the non-coms were just waiting to see what Hamlett was going to do about this situation. So, after stables on such and such a day, this guy hadn't shown up. I said, "Sergeant Braut, get ahold of Lieutenant X and tell him to report to the Battery Commander's office at 1:00." "Yes, sir," he says with a little smirk. At 1:00 Lieutenant X reported, and I had gotten in behind the Battery Commander's desk, and as I remember, I was actually the Battery Commander. The Battery Commander had gone off on leave or something and I had been put in command. And I told this young fellow, I said, "Don't look at me right now as your friend, Ham Hamlett. I'm your Battery Commander and I'm going to give you some direct orders. And boy, you're going

to carry them out or I'm going to crucify you." And I dressed him down and told him exactly what I wanted him to do as an officer in that Battery, and he never spoke to me again for 9 months. But he did what the hell he was supposed to do in the Battery. We got on good terms later, I never mentioned it. And he became a good officer. The last time I was associated with him he was a Division Artillery Commander. So, he learned. Maybe I taught him something.

INTERVIEWER: I think so.

INTERVIEWER: He probably appreciated it, years later.

INTERVIEWER: You were at Texas then, for about two years?

GEN HAMLETT: Yeah, we left Texas and in June, the latter part of June, 1931, no, that was 1932, I had been there two years, and we got in that little Ford automobile that I had bought in Columbia, Kentucky two years before, and headed west for San Francisco. We were to sail from San Francisco on the second day of July. Now, another thing I did while there in the 12th Field Artillery, I did, I rode a lot. I didn't play golf, and I didn't play baseball, a lot of the young officers played baseball during the summer, but you had a lot of time in those days after the morning training, take care of the horses, and stables, and whatnot, the afternoons were devoted to administrative type things. The soldiers were all out cutting grass so forth and so on, so the officers on the large part, were on their own to do whatever they wanted to, and I used to ride horses, and train jumpers and polo ponies, and try to make a little money on the side, training the polo ponies, and I did, I sold a few ponies, but when I left there I sold two horses to the government, I think for \$150 a piece, and I hadn't gotten my June pay, and Fannie and I started out, and we stopped in El Paso, to spend the night with my

roommate, Ham Howze and right, yeah, right, he was one of the major generals retired there, and two or three others that were down there in the 1st Cavalry Division, which was then in El Paso, which is now Fort Bliss. Anti-aircraft business.

INTERVIEWER: What was your wife's full name, sir? Before you were married?

GEN HAMLETT: Francis Valencia Underwood. Her father was a mining engineer, and oil man. He had an interesting career. He was a graduate of VMI and had been more or less a soldier of fortune in the early days. He was in the Boxer Rebellion, much older than Fannie's mother, I never did know him. He was dead by the time I met her, her mother was a widow. Who married later to a fellow who retired as a colonel. But, she had lived all over the world and particularly down in South America and that, holding down in Mexico and that sort of thing. She's bilingual in Spanish. Her mother came from the west coast of Mexico. One of the old Spanish families down there. But, we stopped there and I tell you this because it's an amusing story. We stayed too long and spent too much money, so we went on west, went into San Diego. I'll never forget San Diego, in was a beautiful town. And we came off that desert, and in those days you had no air conditioning in the car, you had to drive at night across the desert. Everyone drove at night rather than in the daytime. You just couldn't take it. We got into San Diego and that cool ocean air hit us and it was great. And we drove up the coastal highway, the old coastal highway into San Francisco. We stopped at the St. Francis Hotel because

my wife said that's where they always stayed when they went to San Francisco, and I'll never forget the room was \$9.50, big beautiful double room, we moved into it, and I said, "Well, Honey, let's go on out now to Fort Mason where they told me I could get my horse money and my month's pay." So we got in the little automobile and went out to Fort Mason and I walked into the Finance Office there and laid my credentials on the table and said, "Now I want my pay, and the pay for the horse." This was the first day of July. The fellow shook his head and said, "Haven't you heard?" I said, "No," He said, "There ain't no money." I said, "What are you talking about?" He said, "They didn't appropriate any money and nobody is getting paid." I said, "I don't know what I'm going to do. I don't have much money and I'm staying at the St. Francis Hotel." He said, "You better move out of the St. Francis Hotel." So, I went back, got Fannie at the hotel, and we got out of the hotel and they didn't charge us anything. I told them the story. I said, "I'm broke, I've got to move out where it's cheap." We moved into the Hostess House down at Fort Mason, where the fare was \$.50 a night for the two of us, and the room, and you could get a beautiful meal there for \$.35. Now, this made quite a difference. I had, we toted up our money and we had about \$25.00. Well, unfortunately going to town the next morning I stripped the clutch on this Ford automobile. I had to put it in the garage, and it cost us \$15.00 or so to get that fixed and that leaves me with \$5.00 and the only entertainment that we had in the great city of San Francisco, we saw a movie for 10¢ each called "Trader Horn." I'll never forget that movie. And

that's all we saw on San Francisco. Got on the boat and we had exactly \$2.50, meanwhile Fannie had been trying to get me to get in touch with her mother or get in touch with my mother, and get some money from home. I said, "No, we started out to do this on our own, and we're going to stay on here as long as got \$2.50, that was after paying whatever it was that you had to then, for rations, very cheap. We got on the boat and Fannie said, "Well, I've been invited by Mrs. Walter Gullion to play bridge in the bridge tournament, but it's going to cost \$2.50." I said, "Well, that's just what we've got, go play bridge with Mrs. Gullion." And she did, she got in the bridge tournament, and doggone if she and Mrs. Gullion didn't win the tournament, and she won, I think it was \$15.00, and we were able to tip the maid, and people on the boat that you were supposed to tip then, and get off with \$5.00 in our pockets. That was our trip to Hawaii. I got off the boat in Hawaii with \$5.00.

INTERVIEWER: Did you ever collect for those horses?

GEN HAMLETT: Yeah, oh, yeah. As a matter of fact, it was really a good thing if we'd had as much money as we would have wanted to have in San Francisco, we would have squandered it on hotel rooms, and going to this and that, and expensive meals, but we didn't. We had to live very frugally and when the money did come through, we needed it a lot worse than we needed it in San Francisco, because we didn't have any furniture. Over there it was in a suitcase. We had one or two things that showed up later, they were shipped late. That was a good tour out there in Hawaii in those days, too. And I was very, very fortunate in being assigned to

a good battery, a howitzer battery commanded by a very fine man, Captain Philp, Rusty Philp.

INTERVIEWER: How much artillery was there on the island, at that time, General? Do you have any idea?

GEN HAMLETT: There was, let's see, one, two, three, four battalions. Four battalions. There was the 8th Field Artillery, there were two battalions in the 8th, and two battalions in the 13th. No, wait a minute, I'm wrong, there were, we had the 11th and the 13th, and there were two battalions in the 11th and two battalions in the 13th. I think I'm right about that. These were light artillery. The 11th Field Artillery was a howitzer outfit. This battery we had a very senior 1st lieutenant as the Battery Executive who was a very knowledgeable fellow, very fine gunnery in particular. And I learned an awful lot from him, in that battery, we had two other lieutenants in the battery, but they left the battery soon after we got the Knox Trophy test. I got there just before it started, and being one of the junior officers had to fire a problem, at that time. Poor old Doc Martin, who was the Executive, really put me through the jumps, getting me ready to fire that problem. One problem I had to fire as the junior officer in the battery.

INTERVIEWER: What were the battery officer slots at that time? You had the Battery Commander. Did you have the Exec there?

GEN HAMLETT: We had the Executive, and then the Motors Officer and I was assigned as the Motors Officer, and the mess officers.

INTERVIEWER: Who did the fire direction then? The Exec?

GEN HAMLETT: You did it yourself. There was no such thing as fire direction. You just took the firing battery out and fired, and a telephone went from your OP down to the Executive, and he did the work at the battery, that the Executive has always done, and the firing was done from the firing point, and there wasn't any way, you didn't even have the communications with the battalion headquarters to do anything about fire direction. Battalion Headquarters was purely administrative thing. In those days.

INTERVIEWER: But the Executive officer did the computations for firing, or was this done by the FO?

GEN HAMLETT: No, no, you did that yourself.

INTERVIEWER: I, the F.O. did that. That's what I wanted to know. And you had to fire one of the problems on the Knox test?

GEN HAMLETT: That's right. It was very crude compared to what was later. . .

INTERVIEWER: What type of howitzer, or guns did you have at that time?

GEN HAMLETT: It was the old WWI, 155 Howitzer. We started WWII with them, they were good guns. Did you all ever see one of them?

INTERVIEWER: Yes, sir, I did.

GEN HAMLETT: They were good guns. Good howitzers, we had very little trouble with them, of course, at that time, they manufactured all the bugs out of those things, but they were fine. We had a Holt Tractor. They were big, it weighed, 5 tons, and man, did you have trouble keeping those running. And as the Motors Officer, it was my business to see that they were running. We were awfully lucky during these tests that we had. I

talk about these tests because you asked me about the type of test we had then, how many tractors fell out, you had a forced march of 25 miles, you had to make, and the thing that you were trying to do there was make it in a certain time limit and wind up the march with everything running, and keeping that number of tractors, I think we had about 9 tractors, in a column. Getting them through was quite a problem.

INTERVIEWER: Where was your impact area? Did you fire on . . .

GEN HAMLETT: Out in Hawaii, we had a very small impact area, we were right on the reservation there, at Schofield Barracks, and we shot up into the mountains there. It was safe enough, but it wasn't deep enough. And the terrain was very, very tricky because it was filled with arroyos, it was jungle, you were shooting in the jungle, really. And it wasn't easy, though it wasn't long range or anything.

INTERVIEWER: Lot of site problems.

GEN HAMLETT: Yeah, you could really get fooled.

INTERVIEWER: How would you describe the time you had in Hawaii? How much time was spent in the field, and the garrison and the additional duties, or the social activities you had during your tour there?

INTERVIEWER: And what were some of the additional duties that you had? That you recall?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, at that time, the Hawaiian Division was noted for its athletics, a great deal of stress put on athletics and the teams, and we had a great deal of competition in the division between the Regimental Teams. The Infantry and the Artillery and in one regiment, or it

was just a battalion of Engineers. We had a regular league, baseball, football, track, basketball, I was assigned as the football coach. The minute I hit that island, I was the football coach of the 11th Field Artillery, and I've often thought that my career in the 11th Field Artillery was more dependent on my success as a football coach than as a battery officer. Because as the football coach I was out there in front of everybody. But as a battery officer, all I had to do was answer to my battery commander. So, being the football coach, of a regiment was a real big job for a young fellow, and fortunately I was successful. I took over a team that hadn't won a game the year before and I had a good buildup and the second year I was there we tied for the Post Championship, so that made me a success as a coach. Which, didn't hurt my efficiency report any when it went across the desk of the regimental commander.

INTERVIEWER: What kind of efficiency reports came out in those days? Were they pretty objective, were they inflated then?

GEN HAMLETT: No, they were very poorly drawn up and really didn't mean much of anything. They could crucify you by just saying you were unsatisfactory or satisfactory, but it wasn't a good report. I don't think we've ever had, we've had good reports insofar as their makeup is concerned, but it's never been the type of a report, that didn't take the personal element out, and I don't know how you do it. I don't think we'll ever be able to do it. It just has to be a process over the years, that is evaluated by promotion boards. And, so I have made some derogatory remarks about efficiency reports, I don't think it's because we're not smart enough to draw up a report that should reflect an officer's capa-

bility, it's the guy with the pen in his hand that doesn't put it down like he should. Too much personal element involved, in these things, and there always will be because you have to look over the reports of a man over the years to evaluate, and I think we do this pretty well. I'm not saying we can't come up with a good promotion system, but the efficiency reports are awful difficult to decipher sometimes. And this is the problem, I think.

INTERVIEWER: Were the Battery commanders in those days, and the regimental commanders as reluctant to put down that an officer was unsatisfactory?

GEN HAMLETT: Human nature hasn't changed, in the last 45 years. It's still the same, and you're still dealing with people. You still have the same feelings about people, so that . . .

INTERVIEWER: Did you ever see your reports as a young officer?

GEN HAMLETT: No, you never got to see them then. They never showed you the report. The Battery Commander could if he wanted to, and after the Knox Trophy, our Battery Commander, CPT Philp, called all of us in and showed us our efficiency report. And he rated Doc Martin I remember, superior and his other lieutenants as excellent. Now, this was a good report for a young lieutenant then. In those days if you got a satisfactory, you were doing all right. It was that unsatisfactory that you didn't want to get. Because you were really graded in a great many ways on your years of service, rather than your knowledge of a particular aspect of your duties and so forth. So, that was a great efficiency report. For my age and grade, my third year as a commissioned officer, I became an excellent officer. And of course, from then on I strived to keep

that. This is good, and it was a good outfit. H. L. C. Jones was our Battalion Commander and he's the man who would be the Director of Gunnery when I reported to Fort Sill, and he was a very knowledgeable field artilleryman, WWI service, and a gunnery expert, and he ran the firing points for the battalion on the firing that we did in those days, and did a good job of teaching you what should be done and all that. I later became executive of that battery and I learned a lot about the executives work with a medium gun which is a lot different from the French 75's, which you can muscle around anywhere, but you can't muscle those big old howitzers around anywhere. So that was a good experience going for me, going from the light artillery to the medium artillery. All in the first 4 years of my service.

INTERVIEWER: Did you see a lot of the battalion and regimental commanders or were they rarely in the field?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, no, I saw a lot of them, lot of them I saw because they were around all the time. The regimental commanders you didn't see so often, but your battalion commander, he was around all the time, and you had a lot of officer's calls then. More stress was put on putting out orders through officers call, well, we had an officers call every day. Where the officers were brought together and told what was going on, and they were good. We had gunnery schools in the regiments, too. Usually the most recent graduate from Fort Sill would be the instructor in gunnery and that was done by battalion. Each battalion had a gunnery school

and the nearest graduate in the outfit from Fort Sill would be the gunnery instructor. And, you'd learn the most recent developments and things that were going on at the school, you'd be taught. It put you in good stead when you went to the school because you weren't behind. You knew what the school was doing and it helped you in your courses there. The social life in Hawaii was good, you might say it was rigorous. Every night you had to put on a tuxedo, you didn't get caught anywhere without your tuxedo on, at night. You had dinner in your tuxedo. Even going down to the boxing matches, every officer went to the boxing matches with his tuxedo on, black tie, new shirt, the girls wore long dresses, and there was a lot more stress put on decorum and dress and spit and polish, if you want to put it that way. It was a spit and polish outfit. The whole Hawaiian Division then was a spit and polish outfit. Nothing bad about spit and polish if you do it the right way.

INTERVIEWER: How important were the wives to the officers in those days? Were there names and their habits reflected on efficiency reports?

GEN HAMLETT: No, no, I don't think that ever made a particular difference. Your wife, though, soon got a reputation of being able to mix and entertain or not. And you knew who the good ones were and who the good ones weren't. In other words, I think if you live on a Post today you have some of the same, but of course the Army has gotten so very, very large, in recent years, that this isn't carried around with you, like it was in those days, because the Army was small. See, when I was, up until the beginning of WWII, the regular Army was a little over 100,000 soldiers

and 13,000 officers, and that fluctuated up and down a little bit, this was, you take an officer corps of, I don't remember how many generals, but I don't think there were more than 2 dozen in the whole Army. At that time. Everybody, for instance in the artillery, had a pretty good idea about other people in the artillery although you may never have seen them, you'd heard about them, at parties and discussions and so forth, and when you'd meet them, you'd remember what had been said about them and their wives, so it was a much closer knit family group than we have today. Much smaller.

INTERVIEWER: So your reputation did kind of follow you?

GEN HAMLETT: Yeah, your reputation followed you around. It really did. It followed you around. And of course, it was so small that you served time and again with or under the same people.

INTERVIEWER: Did your interest in gunnery begin in Hawaii?

GEN HAMLETT: No, I think my interest, real interest in gunnery began in the 12th Field Artillery. Because when I went there I didn't know anything about gunnery, I had to learn a lot. I had to start studying the pamphlets that came out at Fort Sill, and the old War Department Circulars and that sort of thing, and then out in Hawaii I became much more interested there because of the Knox Trophy test that I was thrown into and then we had a very fine young gunnery officer, named Russ Mayie, who taught gunnery. He was a recent graduate of Fort Sill, Russ and I later worked together at Fort Sill, as gunnery instructors, he went back to

Sill as a gunnery instructor. I had a great interest right from the very beginning in gunnery, still interested in it, don't study it anymore.

INTERVIEWER: You only stayed in Hawaii 2 years?

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, it was a little over 2 years. My wife had a terrible hay fever allergy out there, and she went home after the first year out there, to see if it was Hawaii that was doing it. The doctors wanted it. Sure enough, she stopped sneezing the minute she got out of sight of Diamond Head, came back 6 weeks later and started sneezing and coughing when she got in sight of Diamond Head, and it became very serious because I would have to get up in the middle of the night and take her down to the hospital for a shot of adrenalin. It was affecting her heart, and the Post Surgeon at that time was the father of my former roommate who was killed, Buddy Gibner, who I told you about, so he was very interested in this particular case, and told me I had to go home. He said, "Quit fighting it, I know you like it out here, but this is no good for Fannie, and she can't take this any longer, and I'm going to get you orders back to the States." That's why I didn't stay out the full period there.

INTERVIEWER: What was a full period in those days?

GEN HAMLETT: Three years.

INTERVIEWER: Three years.

INTERVIEWER: So you left . . . ?

GEN HAMLETT: I left, I'd had a little over 2 years.

INTERVIEWER: And you went to Fort Sill, Oklahoma? To the 18th Field

Artillery?

GEN HAMLETT: That's correct, and I immediately made a bad reputation in the 18th Field Artillery. And was busted out of the regiment. I'll have to tell you about that. See, I had been in horses, since the 12th, though I'd done a little riding out in Hawaii, and the first day I reported to that regiment, and I won't use his name, but they had one of the "gung-ho" horsemen commanding this, well, it wasn't a regiment, it was a battalion, commanding this outfit, and he was having a horse show the next day. So, he sent word down to my battery commander, who's name I forget, but who was a very decent fellow, that he wanted this young lieutenant who'd reported that day, to ride in this horse show. He wanted to find out if he could ride. The next day. And he personally assigned a horse to me. And the Battery Commander, without even telling me went up and protested because this horse had a reputation of being a real mean horse to ride over jumps. And this made the battalion commander mad and he sent the battery commander back to tell me that I would ride this horse. Well, I rode the horse and I stayed on board, but I knocked down every jump on the course. So, this was bad. Here, I made a poor showing before this great horseman. And my legs weren't good, I hadn't been riding, you know. You get up, and I was taking 4 foot jumps there, 4 nine jumps, those are big jumps. For a fellow who hadn't been riding for a long time. Well, the next day, to make matters worse, we went out on a horse march, and God, it was hot, and I was put at the head of the column. Now, I knew a lot about horses, I'd been raised in the country, and frankly, I think

I knew more about horses than this great horseman did. And the care of horses and whatnot. One thing, that will kill a horse off in the heat is the same pace, no matter what it is. No matter whether it's a walk or a trot or a gallop. You've got to change your tempo. The order came to walk the battery back to gun park. Well, we were out about 6 miles. And so we walked, and walked, and I went back down my column and looked my horses over and I had some horses that were getting in bad condition. So, I said, "Trot-Ho." And I trotted the horses for about 2 minutes, no more. Loosened them up, and took them back to a walk. We got into the stables, and unhitched, and unharnessed and sure enough, we had an old mare, who had what we called the "thumps." Now, I don't know whether you ever seen a horse who's just about to collapse from the heat, but their heart gets to going this way, and you can see it. This horse was in bad condition. And this battalion commander inspected the horses, to see how they were. Now, he had observed, that I had given "Trot-Ho" to this battery of horses and he took this really to heart and he said, "You trotted that battery, and look what you've done. You may have killed a horse, and if that horse dies, you'll pay for it." I said, "All right, sir." "Why did you trot them?" I said, "It has been my experience, sir," and I told him that you maintain them. And he said, "What the hell experience do you have? You're a borderline soldier." He really gave me a hard time. I said, "I was raised with horses, and so forth," but granted, that horse is in bad condition, and I think it would have been in worse condition if I hadn't given "trot." "Well, didn't you get my order?" I said, "Well,

I didn't realize it was your order. I had gotten an order by messenger to walk the horses into the stable, and I thought being in charge of this battery, it was my responsibility to get them to the stables, and I gave them trot because I thought it was the best thing to do." Boy, this young upstart of a lieutenant was talking too damn much. Because the next day I was ordered to be Assistant Post Signal Officer, at Fort Sill. That's the only time I can remember I was ever relieved from something, I always talked too much. I got in trouble because I thought I knew so much, I guess.

INTERVIEWER: How old were you when that happened, sir?

GEN HAMLETT: About 25, I guess, 24 or 25. Four years, yeah, I was 25. But I really thought I was an experienced officer by that time. Been around.

INTERVIEWER: How long did you stay at Sill then?

GEN HAMLETT: I stayed there, I was what they called a snow bird. See, I came in in the Spring, and I snow birded, actually, I've got my times a little mixed up here because I did stay in the 18th Field Artillery for a couple of months. But I always did something to upset this battalion commander. Starting with this episode of not being able to ride very well in this horse show we put on, but I wasn't a bad rider. I was a good rider, I was just out of condition. My legs had gone having been over there and not riding any. They came back, I could ride all right. He never forgave me for a lot of things. I stayed there as the Post Signal Officer and by golly I learned some things as the Assistant Post

Signal Officer because the Signal Officer went on leave and left me with the responsibility of putting in an automatic telephone system, at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. I had a crew of men up from Fort Sam Houston from Corps Headquarters to do the work. People who knew how, but I had to do all the reporting and ordering, and surveying, they didn't have a surveyor, I had to survey some things, and all this sort of business. It was a real experience. Because I had never had anything to do with contracts before. And I had to make and let contracts for cable, and various other things. And it taught me a lot about business in the Army, not business in general. Then I went to school the next year to the Regular Course. It was the first year that they hadn't had the Battery Officer's course and the advanced course. They had put them all together this year, and it was really a hodge-podge. They didn't do a very good job and it was a difficult course because we had all the hardest things that they taught in basic field artillery, and all the hardest things they had had in the advanced course, which was mostly tactics. But, it wasn't too bad, it was a good course, we learned a lot because we worked like dogs. Worked like dogs, but I enjoyed it. I enjoyed it very much. And did very well. As I say, I was competing, and I wound up right on top. I wasn't number one in the class, but I was damn near it. I think I was number three or something like that. That was a good year, a good year. Then I was ordered back to Fort Sam Houston again, and this time I reported to the 15th Field Artillery, which was a motorized, now, wait a minute, let me get this straight. I stayed on at Sill another year and took the advanced

Motors Course. I took, that was a 6 months course, Advanced Motors Course, I stayed around there until I finished that and then I went to Fort Sam Houston again and joined the 15th Field Artillery which had just been made a motorized regiment and they made me the Motors Officer of the Regiment. And this was really a very fine experience for a young officer in those days, because this was the beginning of the motorization of the Army. And there were an awful lot of problems involved, particularly educating the senior officers, who couldn't get over the stable business, and there wasn't a great deal of understanding about what you did in the motorized business. How you maintained vehicles. I had some really funny experiences with some of the senior officers that I had at that time, and I still, was always able to get into trouble. The first trouble I got into on my return to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, my wife, who always, and still does, drive an automobile like she just wants it wide open all the time. She was caught for speeding by the MP's at Fort Sam Houston. And I was called up to the Regimental Commander's office, I guess we had been there maybe 2 or 3 weeks, I don't know. The first time I had ever been called in there, and he said, "Now, LT Hamlett, I'm going to have to take your car keys away from you because your wife has been caught speeding," I think it was for the second time she had been caught speeding, and the rule of this regiment is, that if you're caught speeding or any member of your family is, twice, you lose the use of your automobile for 2 weeks. I said, "Very well, sir." Went back, and got my keys, and gave them to him. This was old Colonel Honnicutt, and John Honnicutt, was his son, you

may run into John Honnicutt. John is quite a different type than his father. His father had a hell of a reputation. He was a fine officer of his type, but boy, he was a martinet. I gave him the keys and walked out. That weekend the Division Commander had a party for all the new officers on the Post who had reported recently, at his quarters, so we had no way to get there but to walk. You know, clear across the Post, and it was hot. Well, we started out, we thought on time, but we didn't get there on time. We were late and when we got there we were both sweating, and I was in a white uniform, you know, it was summertime, and the adjutant of the division, who was answering the door and introducing people said, I didn't know him very well, his name was Kelly, Al Kelly, he said, "Hamlett, what made you so late?" He said, "Everybody has been here for awhile." I said, "Well, we had to walk and we couldn't make it as fast." He said, "Why did you have to walk?" I said, "Because the Regimental Commander has my automobile keys." He said, "What?" I said, "Because I don't have an automobile." He said, "I want to hear more about this later on. Come on in." So we met the division commander and everything had some tea and cakes, you didn't serve liquor in those days, this was during prohibition. And somebody took us home. But the next morning I got a call from the adjutant down in the division. He said, "Come down here, I want to talk to you about this thing you talked to me about yesterday." Well, I said, "I'd rather not discuss it. I think this is a regimental problem, and I don't want to become involved in something." He said, "You come down here." I said, "OK." So, I got a motorcycle or something and went down to Division Headquarters and went in and here

is the Division Adjutant, CPT Kelly, and he said, "What the hell is this about somebody taking your car keys away from you?" So, I said, "The rule over in the 15th Field Artillery apparently is that if you're caught speeding twice, you lose your car for 2 weeks." He said, "Where were you speeding?" I said, "I wasn't, Fannie was." He said, "You mean? I can't believe that." He said, "Well, that's all, I just wanted to know about it." And the next day I got a call from the Regimental Commander's office, the Sergeant Major says the Regimental Commander wants you right away. I went up there and walked into the office, now, mind you he just had those keys for about 4 days. Old Honnicutt threw those keys out on the desk and he said, "I don't know how you did it, and I don't want to know, but there are your damn keys. You must be some sort of a lawyer yourself." I said, "No, sir. And I want to tell you Colonel, that I didn't cross you on this." He said, "Well, maybe you didn't." I left, I learned later that the Division Commander himself had called him up and said, "Honnicutt, who the hell do you think puts out punishment in this division? Have you ever read Army regulations? I'm the only guy who punishes an officer around here. You don't give out perfunctory sentences of this sort. Never let me hear of this again." Oh, he just ate him up. I felt real sorry for old Honnicutt because I really hadn't meant to get him in trouble. But he never held that against me. Never. He knew he was wrong, thank God he was big enough man to know when he was wrong about something, and I always felt, by gosh, whenever you get into trouble as

a senior officer, you ought to admit when you're wrong. A lot of them don't you know. But old Honnicutt later made me adjutant. He was the fellow that made me adjutant of that regiment. He had a major as adjutant and he busted him. Ran him out, and then he brought me up as his adjutant. Well, he had had, the trouble that he had had in the regiment with adjutants, and he'd had three since he'd been there, was all caused by a sergeant major who thought he was superior in every way to any adjutant that came up there. And he was always getting these adjutants in trouble. And, see, he'd had some not too good people in there as adjutant but the sergeant major was the fellow. And I knew about a lot of this stuff. And I knew that, and had known the sergeant major for a long time. This was my second tour there. And I knew all the key non-coms in the 2nd Division. And I called that Sergeant Major in, and I said, "Sergeant Major, I want to tell you something. I know about a lot of things that go on in this division, and this regiment, and this brigade, with respect to what the non-commissioned officers do after hours. And I want to tell you that if you try to put the scuttlebutt under me, while I'm the adjutant of this regiment, I'm going to crucify you. I just want you to know that." He said, "LT Hamlett, I know you know a lot of things, and you're not going to have any trouble with me." I never did. Because old Jimmy Braut, when I first went to the 15th, had had a talk with me one night over 2 or 3 beers. He had told me that this guy was a moneylender over in the 15th Field Artillery. He was the fellow that controlled the money, and that was a great racket in those days.

Loaning money to the soldier, I guess it still is. Ten dollars, payday comes along, you collect fifteen. And that sergeant major, he was the money man, he had all the money that went out on loans. He was making good money this way. But this was illegal. There was no way you could catch him at it because it was a friendly loan if you caught him, and he knew that I knew this. Well, a sequel to this story, I must, a young fellow coming back from Africa, had been ordered back to the States, after the African campaign and I stopped in a port in North Africa, you know, the one over in, on the Atlantic coast where we went in, where Patton's outfit invaded over there, and I was looking for a room, and they put me in a very poor place, waiting for a plane out, so I said, "Look, I've been in combat and I ought to be better treated than this." You know how when you've been a combat soldier and the rear echelon kind of dumps on you? They said, "Well, this is all we could give you. The town major, the man who is running this show, you have go go see him. If you want any better." I said, "Well, I will. What's his name?" They said, "Colonel Brogan." I said, "Colonel Brogan?" "Yes, did you ever know him?" I said, "I don't know, was he master sergeant in the 15th Field Artillery?" "That's the one." I said, "No, I don't want to see him. I'll stay where I am." I knew he had a reserve commission, and here he was a full colonel, and I was a major. No, he was a good officer though. Made a good record, and he was a fine sergeant major. And no doubt some of the things that he had done to get rid of those adjutants he had up there was he was doing it for the good of the regiment, but I didn't want him tying a can on me.

INTERVIEWER: You made it very clear that the adjutant was a very powerful officer, as opposed to the S-3 that we think is the man who holds the reins on everything. The adjutant position then was probably the best job besides being the Battalion Commander, wasn't it?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, I wouldn't say it was the best job, no, I would never compare the job to the battalion commander's job. It was just a job where you were the fellow next to the throne. You were the voice of the commander. Actually if things had gone on in other parts of the staff, you had to supervise, more or less. You were the administrative officer of the regiment. Now, this was true of regiments and divisions, after you got down to battalions, the adjutant didn't make much, he wasn't much. Usually put some lieutenant in there, but regimental adjutants, and division adjutants, at that time, was a very powerful staff position. This went back to the Adjutant Generals Corps, which for years was the most powerful part of the Army Staff, you know. Boy, you didn't tangle with Adjutant Generals in those days. I mean the Adjutant General in the Department of the Army - he was a wheel. So, this reached over into the higher commands in Combat Arms, too. That the adjutant was the officer on the staff that sort of coordinated and kept things going. It was very unusual for a lieutenant to be an adjutant. He just hadn't had enough experience and whatnot, and I don't know, maybe old Honnicutt got me up there, I know why he got me up there because of this incident and the other one was I kept trying to get him to do certain things about the organization of the Motor Maintenance set up in the regiment and he

wouldn't listen to me. So, I finally sat down and wrote a long paper on it, a study, with my conclusions and recommendations and it was a good study, and sent it up to him. He called me in and said, "This is the best paper I ever read from a young lieutenant like you. And, I think you're right, and I've been wrong. You go down and get this thing straightened out the way you recommended." And then after that when I got this going, we got another fellow in, I had been there a year, from Sill, who would take over as the Motors Officer, and I went up as Adjutant. You know, you forget a lot of things, though, about time periods in there. Sometime in this period I went back as Motors Officer again, I've forgotten just how that occurred, and then they sent me over, of all things, back to the 12th Field Artillery, oh, that was after I became McNair's aide, he juggled me around in the brigade. Back to the 12th Field Artillery, to organize their motors setup. I helped them get rid of the horses, and bring in trucks, and set up their motor shops for them and all this. And that was a good experience. Then we had that right after that we had, that's when I went back to the 12th, they lost the Motors Officer over in the 15th, and I became Motors Officer again. And then we went into the PID Tests (Proposed Infantry Division Test) and that was a very, very fine period insofar as I'm concerned. Being mixed up in the development which would have lasting impact on the Army for years, because it was the end of the old square division, and our development of the three regiment setup, triangular division, as we called it, with everything motorized, and it was all run by Leslie J. McNair

who was a brigadier general at the time, and he wrote every test himself, including typing them, he was one of the most beautiful typists you have ever seen. Can you imagine today a brigadier general commanding a brigade only he wasn't commanding a brigade, he was running the tests, sitting there writing the tests on a typewriter. He did it, I saw it, beautiful. Gosh, what a wonderful man he was with the English prose. You could take a paper into him, 2 pages long, and he's read it very quickly, and say, "Well, that's fine, you've got all the ideas in, now, let's see how we can rearrange it." Red pencil, red pencil, red pencil - now if you do that, how do you like that? I'd say, "It looks pretty good to me." You'd go back and write it and it would be half a page. Two pages to half a page. He had the greatest knack for doing that that I've ever seen. You know, he became the general in command of Army Ground Forces, training all the divisions, and he set up all the tests there. He didn't write all those, but boy, he reviewed every one of them. He brought me back from Africa, after the African campaign, to be Assistant Artillery Officer in the Training Program there, and to be on the inspection team from his headquarters. We wrote the tests, and watching the tests and seeing that our test schemes all through the service were doing the job they were supposed to do, boy, those were great days. And then he was sent to Europe, and he called me in before he left, and said, "I'm going over to Europe, you'll be hearing from me." That's all he said, I knew what he meant, he meant he was going to take me. I had been bitching about being held there, I wanted to get back into combat. I wanted to be over there

for the big show in Germany. So, I waited, sure enough, he was killed the next week, and then I knew I was without a friend. And I'll get into that later because I got a job, I got back.

INTERVIEWER: You went back to Fort Sill, again, after your tour at Fort Sam Houston? This was in 1939. You finished a three year tour at Fort Sam, were you General McNair's aide at Fort Sam?

GEN HAMLETT: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: And then did you go with him to Fort Sill?

GEN HAMLETT: No, no. He went from Fort Sam to Fort Leavenworth. He went to Fort Leavenworth, to reorganize Fort Leavenworth, as a staff school, and he, and Alva Fitts was the other side at the time. He called us in and said, "I know you young men are my aides, and you're doing a good job. Now, don't you feel bad about this, because I'm just not going to take either one of you with me, I've got somebody up there as an aide, and you're doing too good a job down here in the unit you're in," we weren't really aides, we just wore the aide insignia and drew \$12 a month. And we, on weekends, if he was having a party or something, one of the aides in white would go over and help run the receiving line and this sort of thing, but he left us there and before leaving I told him I wanted to go back to Fort Sill. To the Gunnery Department.

END OF SIDE ONE, TAPE TWO, INTERVIEW #1
WITH GENERAL BARSDALE HAMLETT.

SECTION 3

INTERVIEW WITH GENERAL BARKSDALE HAMLETT

THIS RECORDING IS IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE US ARMY MILITARY HISTORY RESEARCH COLLECTION, SENIOR OFFICER ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM. THE SENIOR OFFICER BEING INTERVIEWED IS GENERAL BARKSDALE HAMLETT. THE INTERVIEWERS ARE COLONEL JOHN J. RIDGWAY, AND LIEUTENANT COLONEL PAUL B. WALTER, BOTH FROM THE US ARMY WAR COLLEGE, CLASS OF 1976. TODAY'S DATE IS 4 FEBRUARY 1976. WE ARE IN THE MILITARY ORDER OF THE LOYAL LEGION ROOM, IN UPTON HALL, CARLISLE BARRACKS. THIS IS INTERVIEW NUMBER THREE, REEL NUMBER THREE. RECORDER SET TO ZERO, NOW.

INTERVIEWER: General Hamlett, when we left off on our last interview, we were talking about your tour at Fort Sam Houston with the 15th Field Artillery. I believe at that time you were discussing General McNair's moving, and the reason for him not taking you with him. I believe you mentioned something about a strong desire to go back to Fort Sill. Could we pick up there, please?

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, I would like to discuss Fort Sill a little more because, while I was a student at Fort Sill I became intensely interested in two things. Gunnery and that's always been my first love in the artillery, as well as the motorization of the Army. And I forgot to mention while we were talking about my tour there at Fort Sill, that I was sent to Fort Sill right in the middle of the dust storm year I don't know whether we discussed that or not. But this was a real phenomena that, thank goodness, has not re-occurred since that time. A great drought throughout the midwest, and then based on a lot of poor farming methods that they used through Colorado and Kansas, and whatnot, with terrific winds during the summer of 1934, they just blew the soil right out of the western states, into Oklahoma and off from Oklahoma down into Texas. It was one of the hottest summers on record. I remember that for 49 days the temperature at Fort Sill during July and August didn't drop below 100 degrees, night or day. Well, when we came back from Hawaii my wife was expecting a child, and it was so terrible, and she wasn't getting along very well at all, that she went down to Mexico with her mother, down to the mountain

around Monterrey to spend those two months, July and August. She came back there after the heat had subsided somewhat. And our daughter was born at Fort Sill, Oklahoma in November. November the second, 1934.

INTERVIEWER: And what was her name, sir?

GEN HAMLETT: Her name was Otila Crume Hamlett. Crume for my mother's family, and the Otila, for her mother, her grandmother, her mother's mother. She married into the Army later to a young fellow named Stanley and the Stanley brothers are famous at West Point because there were 4 of them who graduated from West Point. She spent her life in the Army, at the present time, though, he's retired and working for RAMCO out in Saudi Arabia. But, I bring up this summer of '34 because it was just a miserable period. It was in the middle of the Depression, it was the hottest summer, on record; we had the dust storms, where, at times, you couldn't see across the street, and yet, I developed a great affinity for Fort Sill and what was being done at Fort Sill. Because, frankly, it was the only place that I could find at that time, that people were being progressive and trying to push ahead and develop new ideas, particularly in gunnery techniques and how to use artillery in combat, and so forth. So, I always wanted to go back to Fort Sill, and specifically into the gunnery department. But I had some tough luck in the gunnery department. I had friends, who were instructors, who would put my name up every year, but they had a Director of Gunnery at the time who still believed the horse was a superior animal on the battlefield, and I had been so adamant against this, and he knew about it, that he black-balled me every time they put my name up so I couldn't get in the gunnery department. About the time McNair left Fort Sam Houston and notified me that he didn't think it would be a good thing for me to go along with him. I learned

that they were asking for volunteers to join the Army Air Corps, and take a year's training in their balloon program. Now, this balloon business was for observation balloons, and I talked with General McNair about this. I remember he said, and I asked him, I said, "General do you think it's a bad thing to transfer to another branch for a period?" "Oh," he said, "No, nothing like that will ever hurt you. You'll learn something, and why don't you do it?" I said, "I will if they'll send me to Fort Sill," because at that time the First Balloon Squadron, US Air Force, was stationed at Fort Sill, where they worked with the school observation problems and what not. Well, from this I did ask for this detail, and was assigned as to the 1st Balloon Squadron and was sent back to Fort Sill, not as a gunnery instructor, but as a balloonist. Very interesting period, as a matter of fact. I had three ratings by the time I finished that year. I was a free balloon pilot, a captive balloon pilot, and a motorized balloon pilot. In those days these balloons they had, they were small dirigibles, lighter than air, and they were filled with, helium, not hydrogen which was very explosive. They had given that up because it was very dangerous. It was helium. And I learned all about helium and we had a great deal of equipment there that we had to work with. We learned how to patch balloons, and actually how to make balloons. You know, to this day, I have a rubber mattress that I made there in 1939, and the thing still holds air and you can use it if you go out in the field. I've been using it that long. Made out of balloon fabric, but this was an interesting year because it was something absolutely new. And during this year I had an opportunity to sell myself to the new Director of Gunnery, who, fortunately had been my, for me, had been my Battalion Commander in the 11th Field Artillery in Hawaii, when I had been in D Battery of the 11th and we won the Knox Trophy. So, this was H. L. C. Jones, Colonel Jones. He said he'd be very happy to have me come

into the gunnery department. I was very happy about this but I had a terrible time getting out of the Air Corps, it wasn't the Air Force. They wanted, there were 6 of us that stayed on, or rather who were in this program, and at that time, the Air Corps was expanding and they were looking for officers with our background with a years service that we had, and they insisted that I go to Randolph Field and take the "Heavier than Air" course and join the Air Corps as a regular officer in the Air Corps. I had no desire. I had seen...to begin with, I didn't like to fly. To me, flying an airplane was boring. You'd sit up there and watch instruments and hope you're where you think you are, and it wasn't active enough I suppose. I never have liked flying airplanes. I know a lot of people think I'm crazy because I don't like to fly an airplane, but I don't. So I turned this down and finally had to get Colonel Jones to intercede on my behalf with the Chief of Field Artillery. In those days we still had Chiefs of Combat Branches, and he, in turn, went to the Air Force, and had me relieved from this duty, and I went over to the school then, as the 13th instructor in the gunnery department, in the summer of '39. When I left the gunnery department, in 1942 to go to England with General Clark and his staff, I was a director of one of the large areas in the gunnery department, which we had some, as I remember, 87 instructors, and that was just 1/4 of the gunnery department. Terrific expansion during that period, and not only were we expanding, but we were working on new techniques. We were working on concentration of fire, on things that involved transferring of fire from one sector to another, and bringing in large numbers of guns from battalions and batteries to attack one target, by surprise. This was an exceptionally interesting thing to me because all during my stay down at Fort Sam Houston in the 15th Field Artillery, General McNair kept harping on this, to the officers. He had been in WWI, as an Army Artillery

officer, and was one of the very young brigadier generals in WWI, and he had realized how, really how far behind we were in the real use that you could expect to derive from the fire power of artillery concentrated on a front. The reason this was not done was because this was all, this transfer of fire and whatnot, was done by battery rather than battalion, and a number of battalions. We developed the artillery graphic firing table at that time. You being artillerymen know what I'm talking about here. I remember when you were visiting me last week, General Hasbrouck talked about the time that he and Colonel Kyser, who took over, by the way, as the Director of Gunnery from H. L. C. Jones, when he was promoted to brigadier general and sent out to a division, with this Reserve Officer who actually came up with the graphical firing table, it wasn't some wizard who was a regular Army officer, it was just a real smart young fellow, a Reserve, who developed the graphical firing table. You know, we made those graphical firing tables at Fort Sill from cherry. People often asked me, "Why did you use cherry? To do this?" The reason was that cherry doesn't shrink. Once it's been kiln dried, it maintains it's texture and doesn't warp. Very, very interesting period and I enjoyed every bit of it.

INTERVIEWER: Wasn't there a General Collins, wasn't he the Assistant Commandant during that time? Lawton, wasn't it Lawton P. Collins?

GEN HAMLETT: No, no, this was, you're thinking about, there was a Collins there, but he wasn't...there were Collins brothers, you're thinking about, and his cousin was Joe Collins, who later became a Corps Commander in Europe during the war and then Chief of Staff of the Army, and Lawton Collins, and then there was a Leroy. ..

INTERVIEWER: Leroy's the one. . .

GEN HAMLETT: Collins who wasn't related, to the best of my knowledge to the Lawton

Collins, and J. Lawton Collins. That was another family. But Leroy Collins was the Assistant Commandant. I never knew him very well. I remember General Allen, who was the Commandant at Fort Sill at that time. He was sort of an elderly man, spent more time inspecting garbage cans than he did the things that were really meaningful at that time, when we were getting ready for war.

INTERVIEWER: Who was that, General?

GEN HAMLETT: General Allen, I forget his first name, we called him "Peep Sight." He was a nice enough old gent, but I mean, completely out of place at that time, as were many superannuated generals of WWI vintage, who were just living out their lives in the Army. He wasn't helping things in the development of gunnery and motorization and all of the things that we needed to do. And there were a lot of them then. You young men don't remember this, but I can remember a certain general, when I was, I had been sent from Fort Sam Houston down to El Paso to join the 82nd, the 1st Cavalry Division, and I was with the 82nd Field Artillery during the proposed Cavalry Division test, I was sent down there because I had gone through the proposed Infantry Division test; and I can remember this very senior general Cavalry, saying to a group of officers assembled, hearing the word of this great man, "We must get our sabres back, and our," what are those things they used to use?

INTERVIEWER: Harpoon?

GEN HAMLETT: No, no.

INTERVIEWER: A lance?

GEN HAMLETT: Lance. "We need to recover our lances as well as the sabre, because the Cavalry needs these weapons." It was the most disappointing thing I ever listened to in my life. The young Cavalry officers sitting around there blushed with shame, to hear this old man talking about that because at that time there was two

factions, one, the horse faction who believed that the horse was still a great thing on the battlefield, and what not, and the younger officers who realized that we had to go to mechanization and armor, and there was this squabble between the two and this continued, too. Between the two factions in the Cavalry, and the Cavalry and the Infantry, and that's why during WWII they sent "Jakie" Devers (General Jake Devers) down to Fort Knox to straighten this thing out. They had to get an artilleryman to get the whole armor business straightened out and get them on the right track as far as equipment and gunnery was concerned. Now, where were we? I was just getting into gunnery there and the expansion of the school and the development of modern gunnery methods. I don't say that any one of us had any particular part of this that we developed. We were all working together, exchange of ideas, we had, at that time, the people that you've all heard of, and know, General Farell, Frank Farell, and he was my immediate superior when I went into the department and up until I was given command of a section of the department myself. George Kyser, and he was a great person, very outgoing and forward thinking type. Charles E. Hart, who retired as a lieutenant general. Russ Maybie, one of the best instructors that I ever had in gunnery. And a number of others, too numerous really, to mention. One of the very interesting things about that expansion period was the fact that we couldn't get officers assigned from anywhere, we had to take our own students and as soon as they graduated from the basic course, give them a week's instruction on how to be instructors in gunnery, and turn them loose. The amazing thing was that most of these, and I'll say 95% of these young officers made excellent instructors. Now they were a little shaky at first, but it didn't take them very long to

develop. Because they knew they had to, there was no one else to do it. And the development of those young instructors was most gratifying to all of us, who had worked with them, when they were students. Very interesting phase.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have adequate number of weapons? Or were you. . .

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, no, we never had what we thought was an adequate number. However, we made out. They sent some National Guard Battalions in at about that time. Yeah, I remember the 178th regiment, from New Jersey? Was that a New Jersey regiment? Anyway, from the East Coast, was sent in. We had an awful time with them at first. They just couldn't...they hadn't been trained, and they were thrown right into the gap, and it was a pretty shaky period, but they came around, just like the young instructors, they learned very quickly and you had what you have anytime you have a big expansion like that, you had growing pains, and you just had to get things straightened out the best you could.

INTERVIEWER: Sounds like you put an awful lot of students through that course.

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, we did, we did. Many, many students.

INTERVIEWER: General, back in 1939, let's see, you were still a lieutenant then, weren't you?

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, in '39 I was a senior, first lieutenant. I was promoted in 1940. A law was passed that promoted everyone with 10 years service, regular service. Along with a lot of other people who had a lot more than 10 years service. People at that time, I believe, if I'm right in saying that they were lieutenants, who had 17 years and 9 months service, who were promoted by that same law. That's why, as a lieutenant, I knew so many people who later became senior generals while I was still in the field grade.

INTERVIEWER: Back in 1939 when the news of Hitler and Germany's attack on Poland, how did the young officers at Fort Sill react, both to that news and to the President's indication that the United States was going to stay out of that war?

GEN HAMLETT: I think without exception, we all felt that this was a war that no way could we stay out of it. No way. There was never any feeling otherwise, that I know of. I certainly felt that way.

INTERVIEWER: Of course, it wasn't too long after that, when we started mobilizing and drafting so many men that you had to expand the gunnery department to accomodate them. Did you have a preference to stay right there or to join the units that might be going overseas? Or were you going to stay there and take care of the training?

GEN HAMLETT: No, I think that everyone . . . you know, we really didn't hit top speed until Pearl Harbor, and after Pearl Harbor, then we were in it and we knew this.

And I think everyone of us at that time, were contemplating just where we should go, just where we wanted to go, and what we wanted to do. And those of us who had been there for some time, were looking forward to getting away from Fort Sill, and getting into the mixup on this thing.

INTERVIEWER: How did you become the Assistant Artillery Officer of II Corps? Didn't you assume that position right out of Fort Sill?

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, this was another sudden move in my life. I had a call from Tom Lewis, (T. E. Lewis,) one afternoon, and he said, "I would like to recommend you for an overseas assignment. But I wanted to clear it with you beforehand. I can't tell you all about it, but you'll be with me, and we'll be leaving the country within 2 weeks. Are you willing for me to put your name in the hopper?" I said, "Go ahead, I'm ready."

INTERVIEWER: Now, what job did he have at that time?

GEN HAMLETT: He was the Corps Artillery officer of the 2nd Corps Staff which was being put together at that time by Mark Clark. Mark Wayne Clark. And this was an oversized staff, because they were putting a lot of people there that you could expand this staff into an Army and a Corps staff. I didn't know that at the time, but this was what happened later. I agreed, and ordered from Fort Sill two days later and I left the day after I received my orders, left my poor wife there with a child, bird dogs and all, and I didn't see her again for some time. And she didn't have too pleasant a life for a while, either. Getting settled someplace.

INTERVIEWER: Was she allowed to stay in quarters there at Fort Sill?

GEN HAMLETT: No, they ordered her right away right quickly. I've forgotten what the problem was, they wanted the quarters, though, and she had to pack up and leave almost immediately after I did.

INTERVIEWER: So, you actually joined the unit?

GEN HAMLETT: At Indiantown Gap.

INTERVIEWER: Right here in Pennsylvania?

GEN HAMLETT: Yeah, Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, and most of these people I'd never known before. We had a good artillery section, and in the artillery section we did have people that I had know, so we became quite a well-knit family group. We moved into England, I believe it was May, of '42, and were stationed in Salisbury, our headquarters was at Longford Castle on the Avon River, just outside of Salisbury. This isn't the Avon of Shakespeare, this is the other Avon River.

INTERVIEWER: Did you get much opportunity to train as a unit before you left for England?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, no, the answer to that is no, we spent most of our time that

summer and early fall assisting in the placement of troops and getting training areas and inspecting the different units that were moving into the British Isles. You remember then, we were getting ready for the invasion of France. But there was a great controversy which I didn't know about at the time, going on, sort of a three-way fight as to whether we would go into France or whether we would go into Africa or whether we would go into the soft underbelly of Europe. There were different factions in both the British and American establishments concerning this. And this is all recorded in other places, who was for what, but the final decision was that we would not, that we were not ready, and it was impossible for us to get ready to make an invasion of France in the fall of '42. And that the next best thing, that we could do with some hope of success, was to invade North Africa. This is what we learned at the last minute, this was where we were going. A very peculiar incident occurred which I had to report to our Corps G-2. I had gone to London on some duty, I forget why I was up there, really, but while there I ran into an old friend of mine, Lou Hammock, who was an Infantry officer, and we had gone out for a night on the town, and were having a great time in a night club in London, and for some reason he started toasting a toast that we had developed many years before when we were lieutenants down in Hawaii. It went, "Here's to Algeria, the land of the sun." And two or three times during the night he toasted, "Here's to Algeria, the land of the sun." And we'd have a drink, and gosh, when I learned three days later that we were going into North Africa, I thought, boy, this inadvertant toasting we did, may have taken the cap off the secrecy here. So, I went to Monk Dixon the G-2 of the 2nd Corps and told him what had happened. I said, "I don't know, I think this ought to be reported, because this was done inadvertantly and neither one of us had the foggiest idea we were going into North Africa." And

Monk said, "Well, if you start talking about something like this, it may become quite a torch, but if we just forget it, I'm sure other people have done things like this, and it may just give us a good cover plan." So nothing, as far as I know, was ever said, but I did feel that I had to report this. It didn't, certainly didn't give the Germans any intelligence, because they didn't know we were going into Africa. I think they knew we were doing something, but they didn't know where it was going to hit. I went in with the First Division, into North Africa, as the Beach Officer, for the 1st Division, on Arzew Beach. I almost drowned going ashore. I jumped off of a landing craft, before it had gotten in to shallow enough water, and I went to the bottom like a rock, but I had the presence of mind to just start walking because I was weighted down by all kinds of equipment, and I just walked out.

INTERVIEWER: Was that a resisted attack that you made?

GEN HAMLETT: No, we had no resistance at Arzew, there was some resistance inland. There was some resistance inland and as a matter of fact, one platoon of French Foreign Legion held up the old 1st Division, that part of the 1st Division that was ashore, for about 24 hours. This shows you the value of the defense when you know what you're doing. This is just outside of Arzew. I think it was Tafarou Airfield that held us up. The first man we captured that I talked with was a captain in the French Foreign Legion, I believe his name was Armstrong, he was from Connecticut and he was quite a character. He had been in the French Foreign Legion for years. Of course, he spoke perfect English, he was an American.

INTERVIEWER: Was General Clark still your commander at that time?

GEN HAMLETT: No. The Corps had been turned over to Fredendall. Fredendall was

the 2nd Corps Commander when we went into Africa. Clark was the overall commander of the American Forces in Africa, and he became the commander of the 5th Army. The 5th Army actually took no part in the African Campaign, but they were involved in preparing for the invasion of Sicily. As we were later after the Campaign, after we had been successful, in taking the Africa Corps. I've always felt that the North African campaign really paid off more in education than it did in winning something. Because it was in North Africa that many of our leaders and our people who were later thrown into Normandy, in the invasion of France, learned something about fighting. It was just a great training field, and it certainly was for all of us, in all ranks, to really get into combat and get bloodied, find out that this thing was for real and not just a training exercise. And we got our noses bloodied several times. And came out of it in pretty good shape, that's where I first ran into Georgie Patton, Omar Bradley, and Terry Allen, and a lot of other characters like that.

INTERVIEWER: You made the remark, I believe it was last night at General Smith's dinner, that you felt that that was not such a bad idea to get in and get bloodied a little bit, to toughen up the Division.

GEN HAMLETT: No, I think you have to before a Division really becomes combat ready. We say they're combat ready, after a certain amount of training. I never saw any division that went into combat right off the bat, that was very successful, until they had actually been bloodied a little bit, in real combat, not training. There is a lot of difference when you're receiving those incomers and when it's all outgoing.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, you've been able to observe some very interesting and diverse commanders. Terry Allen and George Patton are certainly two that are not diamet-

rically opposed, but a little bit different leadership techniques. Would you discuss those two as you saw them?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, there wasn't too much difference between Terry Allen and Patton except Patton was more aloof. They were both rather flamboyant commanders, but Terry was more earthy, he got down to the troops and talked with them, and got along, he wasn't talking to them from a distance. He was talking to them eyeball to eyeball, whereas Patton, in my experience with him, he did a lot of talking, but it was more from the platform. He was more like an orator than it was getting down and talking soldier talk to the soldiers. Terry Allen was a good Division Commander. He had problems and got into some troubles from time to time but I thought Terry Allen by and large, was a good Division Commander. I never did know whether he was relieved in Africa or what, I guess he was, and I never really knew why but he came back again and I had the opportunity, in the United States, after I had been sent back, and was on the Inspection Team from Army Ground Forces, to inspect his Division, and he had an excellent Division in training. What division was it? I think it was the, was it the 102nd or the 104th? But anyway, this division was a good division and they did very well in combat in France later on. Terry; I think he was maligned a great deal. He was a good commander. I liked him personally, and knew him quite well, I saw him from time to time, talked with him. I had a very good job as the Corps Artillery Executive, because it was sort of a supernumerary job. I didn't have a heck of a lot to do, so I was used in all kinds of jobs by the Corps G-3 and by the Corps Commander, to go out in the field, and be with the people who were actually doing the fighting. And that's how I happened to know Terry so well. I was with the 1st Division quite often down in the combat zone, and

I thought he did real well.

INTERVIEWER: I know that Omar Bradley was a very favorite general of yours.

How about the contrast between he and Terry Allen?

GEN HAMLETT: All together different. All together different. General Bradley was a very quiet, very studious type commander. There was nothing flamboyant about Bradley at all. He was a matter of fact person, thought problems out and came up with good solutions, and then saw that they were carried out. And everyone I remember who ever served with him or under him had the greatest respect for his ability, and his knowledge, and his command ability to get things done without making a lot of fuss, and furor. He was one of the commanders who could get things done with a whisper that took other people a shout, if you know what I mean. A great person.

INTERVIEWER: You admired General Bradley for both his soldierly qualities and his qualities as a gentleman I believe you said last night.

GEN HAMLETT: Absolutely, yes. Both; outstanding person, outstanding person.

INTERVIEWER: How about General Patton?

GEN HAMLETT: I came to know Patton real well, on the field of battle. I would hesitate to judge Patton. I know that he has been judged by many people, who were older and more knowledgeable than I am. I always thought that Patton was a very good tactician. He had a feel for the battlefield, but he was very apt to go off on tangents, and one of them was his insistence on the use of armor in situations where it called for other things. I'll give you an example of what I am talking about. When we re-grouped after the Kasserine Pass debacle and started out again down the same roads that we had been on before, we split the Corps between two main areas; one was on the side of the mountain, the Gafsa side, down toward El Guettar,

and the other was on north of that on the other side of a ridge that ran parallel to these two lines of advance through Maknassy. And we had over on the Gafsa side, the 9th, the 1st Infantry Division, and the combat command of the 1st Armored Division, and all of our Corps Artillery; we had a Corps Artillery Brigade with three battalions of artillery in support of this advance down through the compartment of terrain which opened out onto the open plains going into the coast. And the overall objective was to cut Rommel's retreat up the coast, to cut into it, and slow him up, and if possible catch his forces between the British 8th Army and the 2nd Corps. Now Patton had been given command of the Corps. Fredendall had run into problems with his immediate commanders and he'd run into problems with the British, and actually he had been relieved of command though he was not demoted, he was still sent back to the states as a lieutenant general, and remained in the States as one of the Army area Commanders in the training setup. I ran into him later. And I won't pass judgement on Fredendall it was just one of those things. I think Fredendall was still fighting WWI in the trenches, and we were fighting a wide open war down there that you never knew where you were then, I mean, was, and you were apt to meet most any place. There were no lines; a very fluid situation. But to get back to this example, that I referred to Patton. He insisted that we attack the German defenses there, with armor, and for three days I went down as a forward observer for the Corps Artillery and the commanders who were making the advance against the German position which was full of 88 milimeter anti-tank weapons. They were deadly weapons against our tanks. They wanted smoke! Well, I had to give them what they wanted, it was new to me, I always thought that smoke was something you withdrew behind. We had never been taught that you advanced in front of smoke

because you get into your own smoke and become confused. But that's what they wanted so we put down smoke for them. And every day when the smoke lifted and they started the advance after getting so far, well, we'd lose a number of tanks. And it was a bad situation because it was becoming a matter of honor, whether you could get through this thing or not, and Patton was mad at everybody, and the Germans had complete air superiority and they were bombing us all the time. And I asked my immediate commander, Hart, after I'd been down there for 3 days; I looked at this situation, if he wouldn't go down and see if he agreed with me that what we should do was to organize the artillery. We had 11 battalions there. I said, "Why don't we organize this artillery, and really put on the type of artillery demonstration with our firepower that you and I have been studying and working with at Fort Sill for the last three years." I said, "This is the kind of thing that's made to order, for use of artillery and infantry and then bring the tanks in to Bousch out onto the plains, and do what they can." Well, he did, he went down, with General Patton that day. And if you've seen the Patton movie, this was the day young Kerwin was killed.

INTERVIEWER: That was his aide wasn't it?

GEN HAMLETT: That was his aide. By this German bombing. Hart told me later that Kerwin was in a foxhole that I'd been using down there to keep from getting bumped off, so it wasn't a very good foxhole I guess. The reason, by the way, that I had been sent down to do these jobs, I had equipped a half track with three different radios, and I had the best rolling communications center in North Africa at the time. I could communicate with everyone. One station I could get the British, another station I could get our armored units, that was one of those 193 radios, did you ever see one? The AM radio, and the other one I had one of these new 600 series,

in that I could plug into the Infantry and the Artillery of the Division that we had. So I had a real fine communications setup and I had a very knowledgeable and a great fellow, young sergeant, who ran my communications for me. I'll tell you a story which I haven't gotten to yet, I'm ahead of it, about Ernie Harmon, and how I happened to meet Ernie Harmon on the battlefield, who later became a very close friend of mine, and whom I succeeded as president of Norwich University. Anyhow, when Hart came back, to our command post, in Gafsa, which was in a school-house, this is brought out in that Patton movie, too. It's the place where the Germans come in and bomb hell out of the town, when Patton is having a conference with Spaatz and Air Marshal whatever his name was, the British commander, the Air Commander down there, and was brading them because he was getting no air support, the Germans did come in. I was sitting in the next room when this occurred and it had been several days before this incident I'm talking about, and they had dropped three bombs, in the street, it wasn't anything like the way the movie depicts, it wasn't all that bloody blasting of the whole town, but it did make Patton's point, that we needed some air cover and some air support. And this collaborated that and when Patton lost his aide down there, a fine young man, by the way, I said, to Eddy when he came back in, "I think I hear General Patton over there in that next office. Why don't you get him in here and show him on this map what we were talking about yesterday, insofar as an artillery preparation, and advance the Infantry down on that hill en masse and take that thing." Well he did, he went in and said, "General Patton, won't you come in here, we've been talking about this problem we've got down there and we think we have the solution." And General Patton came into our little office, which was just through the door from his, and he was, he really was crying. He was really upset because of this young aide who had been killed. Patton was an

emotional man, and he loved people. He looked at the map and Ed Hart started explaining it to him. And showing him what we could do, by massing the fires of these 11 battalions of artillery that were available, and how we felt that this, and by hitting this hill mass with the infantry, and making a road for the tanks to come on from there would be much better than trying to shove the tanks through in the face of all this anti-tank fire that they were running into. And he agreed. "Well, we've tried everything else, do it that way. You prepare it Hart. Get the G-3 and get on this!" Well, the upshot of it, the next morning, we had a 20 minute preparation, using 11 battalions on this defensive area that the Germans had and our infantry took this position without having one casualty. Not one. We didn't lose a man doing it. And from that day on, General Patton was a dyed-in-the-wool Field Artillery supporter, because he realized that the new thing that we had in the field artillery, the ability to mass great concentrations of fire and to do it quickly, because of the things that we worked out at Fort Sill, and were teaching the people in the field. After the war, I was attending a conference of the 3rd Army Commanders, both senior and junior commanders. I don't know but what all the officers that had been invited above the rank of major or something like that, to Patton's headquarters down in Bavaria and he gave a very fine talk, and Patton could. Patton wasn't a dullard at all, he was smart, in ways. He gave a very fine talk and gave the artillery a real pat on the back. He stated in effect, that if you wanted to really credit someone with doing a major job of winning the war in Europe, you could tie it on the Field Artillery, and the developments that had been made by field artilleryman before the war. Which, I thought, was a very fine accolade for a dyed-in-the-wool armor man to make and in support of another branch.

INTERVIEWER: Did you stay in II Corps right up to July of '43, when you were assigned back to Washington?

GEN HAMLETT: Yes. I was on an LST, all packed, ready to go, we were sailing the next morning, when I was pulled off and told to get back to the United States, that I'd been ordered back. I'd avoided this once before. By suggesting that another officer who had been wounded, take my place and go back. I didn't realize that this was all coming from General McNair, who wanted me back over there. And, this officer had agreed. I'd gone to him and I said, "Look, you're going to have to do something;" he'd had a very bad wound in the arm and it had to be re-broken, and he needed major surgery on it, because it had healed somewhat. He agreed to go back in my place, and had this change. But then, by gosh, after I'd gotten on the LST ready to go into Sicily with the Corps, I got orders again. This time I couldn't avoid it, there wasn't anybody around who had been wounded, and I went back. Naturally, I was ordered back, so I had nothing else to do.

INTERVIEWER: You must have found Washington just alive with both people and activities when you got back in 1942.

INTERVIEWER: '43.

GEN HAMLETT: '43. Oh, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Did your family rejoin you in Washington, or couldn't you find a place to live?

GEN HAMLETT: They were already in Washington.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, I see.

GEN HAMLETT: Living there. Fannie was living there, and we moved again from the apartment she had, to another place. She wasn't well at all, when I got back too. And I think one of the reasons that McNair had requested my transfer back to Washington was not only because of the training program, and he wanted combat experienced officers in the different branches. I wasn't the only one that was ordered back at that time. There were both infantry and armored officers who were ordered back just for

the purpose of supervising the tests and training and some of them were assigned to Army ground forces and some of them to the schools.

INTERVIEWER: What job did General McNair have then?

GEN HAMLETT: He was the Commander of Army Ground Forces with headquarters in Washington, at the old Army War College, that's where the headquarters were. It was a big headquarters, he as the commander was responsible for the training of all the divisions, corps, armies, who were in training in the United States at that time, preparing for the invasion of France. And it was a very tight schedule on the deployment of all these units. And it was nip and tuck on some of them, getting them ready in time to pack them off.

INTERVIEWER: Was it more of a scheduling organization? Or was it designing training?

GEN HAMLETT: Both. Both. We wrote all the tests, for instance. The Field Artillery tests that were given at that time. We wrote them in the artillery section, changed them and then supervised, not the tests, but the testing team. We'd go out to find out if the team that we had appointed, which were Corps Artillery teams, most of them, the Corps Artillery Headquarters. That was an interesting thing, when I came back the first job I had was to prepare a Corps Artillery manual, in other words, a manual in "What is Corps Artillery?" "What does Corps Artillery do?" And so forth. Hart and I had never agreed on the structure of the Corps Artillery. He felt that the Corps Artillery officers should be a staff officer at Corps Headquarters. And that the Corps Artillery command should be exercised by an independent brigade commander. I had never agreed to this, and he knew it, I mean, we had discussed this many times. My theory was, and it was just a theory, my feeling was, and I had a very strong feeling about this, that the Corps Artillery commander should be both a staff officer and a commander and that he shouldn't have to relay

his command responsibilities, or delegate them if you will, to a brigade commander who might be senior to him. As it had been in Africa. We had a very senior brigadier general commanding the brigade, the artillery brigade, 13th brigade, which we had in 2nd Corps, and though this man was just great, we never had any problems with him, he would even ask me, "Well, Ham, what do you think we should do now? What do you want me to recommend?" That sort of thing. I mean, it was just, and he'd say the same thing to Hart. "You go tell Hart that anything he says up there is OK with me." Well, this is fine if you have that personal relationship, but what's going to happen when you get some hard-nosed brigadier, who's supposed to be doing things that a colonel back there at headquarters wants done. I didn't think it would work. Well I won out anyway, because I was sent home and I got a chance to help the people out at Fort Sill sit down and write the book; not only that, I had the opportunity to sit in Army Ground Force Headquarters, and talk to the head man and tell him that I felt this was the way it should be done. But I was honest about it. I told him that Hart didn't agree with me. And that I thought fortunately General McNair and his G-3 both agreed with me. They thought this was the best way and that's the way all Corps Artillery units were organized. We had the Corps Artillery headquarters and the Headquarters Battery, if you remember. And you had actually a setup in Corps Headquarters where you had a colonel, perhaps, holding down the staff side all the time, but he was under the Corps Artillery commander, who was working back and forth, and then out in the operating position, you had a fire direction center. The Corps Fire Direction Center, which was run by another colonel. But the guy running the whole artillery setup was a brigadier general. This worked, I thought it worked beautifully during WWII, and it did during Korea. No problem. You never ran into the command problem that I think you would have otherwise.

INTERVIEWER: Now, would the Division Commanders, the Division Artillery Commanders

at that time, were they organized that way?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, yes. You only had the Division Artillery Headquarters set up that way, too. But this was not, there was no command channel between Corps Artillery and Division Artillery.

INTERVIEWER: No, no I understand, I was saying you had a precedent there that you could fall back on, the Corps should be the same. If it worked well in the Division why shouldn't it?

GEN HAMLETT: Why not in Corps? And I thought it worked. I think Ed Hart changed his mind later on.

INTERVIEWER: Let's see, you stayed as the Assistant G-3 until September of '44. Is that correct? And then you became a . . .

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, General McNair, I know I bring his name up an awful lot, and he was the man probably that had more significant impact on my military career than any other person, went to France; [now] he went over, it was after the invasion had been successful, and they were making the breakout, this was just before the breakout. And he called me to his office one day and said, "I'm leaving, but you'll hear from me very shortly. Just keep your mouth shut about it." And the next day I found out that he had taken off for France. There was never any publicity about his visit, it was just a routine visit to see how the troops were doing in the field. But I was convinced later that he was sent over there to organize a headquarters. I think, though I've never been able to get any of the higher ups to tell me because this was, I think, a nebulous planning thing back in Eisenhower's headquarters, I think perhaps he was going to be the overall Ground Commander in the European Theater. You know, they tried to do this; Montgomery wanted to be this, and there was always, well, you've read the books and what not between Bradley and Montgomery.

Eisenhower just never did let either one of these become the overall guy. He kept that for himself. I've always thought that he would bring in McNair over there to make it him just this type of commander.

INTERVIEWER: Of course, General McNair was killed shortly afterwards.

GEN HAMLETT: He was killed two days after he arrived over there, by our own bombs. This was a tragic thing. The leading bombs they dropped and the wind blew the smoke back and they just kept dropping them back a little more till they caught McNair and a group of people, and he was killed. Anyhow, after he was killed I realized I was afloat without any friends around, and he had agreed, tacit agreement, that I could look for a command; he said, "Don't go too fast on this." Well, I knew all about the different commands, being where I was and I knew that the Artillery Commander of the 16th Armored Division was being ordered away from the Division into a G-3 slot and I also knew that this division was going to be set up to go into France and they didn't know it yet. Well, I got on the phone and called the Division Commander, a man named John Pierce, a Brigadier General John Pierce, and I said, "General Pierce, you're losing your Division Artillery Commander, and you need another one." He said, "That's right. I certainly do." I said, "Well, I'm volunteering for the job. My name is Hamlett, you've never heard of me, and I told him my background as a Field Artilleryman and I said, "I want to be your Artillery Commander." Well, he said, "If you can get the Ground Force people to agree on it, get your orders out, and come on out here. As fast as you can." And that's what happened.

INTERVIEWER: Now what kind of communication did this take place by? Was this by letter, or . . . ?

GEN HAMLETT: No, I got on the phone and talked to him. Letter, hell, I didn't have time to fool with a letter. I just picked up the phone and called the Division Com-

mander and asked him if he didn't want me as his Artillery Commander. I told the G-3 about it before I did this. I said, "I'm going to call him." He said, "Go ahead, I don't care." He was Johnnie Lentz; I had worked there for him for 8 months or so, I don't know how long and Johnnie was looking for a job, too, and he got one also. We got a job at the same time. He got a Corps Artillery Commanders job, and got overseas immediately and I got a Division Artillery Commander's job and got overseas. He was a great fellow, this Lentz, by the way. He was a tower of strength in that Army Ground Force Headquarters. He's still alive and lives down in Asheville, North Carolina, and I haven't seen him since WWII. Someday I'm going to stop by there to see Johnnie Lentz, because I thought the world and all of him. He was a tough cookie, boy, he was a tough one. But good, he was smart, very, very able. He would have made a tremendous Army Commander. He really would have. But, a lot of people that he had rubbed the wrong way during this training period, and there weren't many division or corps commanders who had any use for Johnnie Lentz because at one time or another, he had racked them up, and he had done it because we were in a hurry and had things to do. So, I always felt very badly about Johnnie Lentz. Not going a lot higher than he did in the military, and it was all because he was a dedicated officer who demanded that things be done the right way. And we run into that. All the time, don't we?

INTERVIEWER: Certainly do. Well, it was only 4 months after you joined that Armor Division that you found yourself back overseas again.

GEN HAMLETT: That's right.

INTERVIEWER: Where was the 16th Armored Division when you joined them?

GEN HAMLETT: Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, which, by the way, is an excellent training area, it's not large enough. It was just the right size for our artillery. It

wasn't large enough for 155's, but all we had, of course, was the self-propelled 105 howitzer, and it was just a great place for training a 105 outfit. I learned a lot about command though. Taking over that, see, this was the largest unit that I'd ever commanded, the division. I was still a lieutenant colonel by the way.

INTERVIEWER: I'd like to comment on that general. When we first started the interview, you mentioned all the time that you were a battery officer, and then you were an instructor. The first time you ever get command is without the benefit of any, either battery or battalion command experience. Is that correct?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, no, because I'd had battery command experience in the absence of battery commanders. From time to time, I had commanded a headquarters battery, .. gun battery, and a service battery at one time. For short periods, but being associated with units, see, I'd been in units a lot more than I'd been on staff. You learn a lot about what not to do. But I, being thrown into this command, which was as large a command as I'd ever been associated with before, as a battery officer really, I learned things in a hurry. I had to. One thing I learned that I followed the rest of, (my life) you've got to take what you have, and make the best you can out of it. You can't go around relieving people all the time, just because they do something wrong. You gotta get them straightened out and get them on the right path. There wasn't anybody; if I relieved an officer, there wasn't anybody there except some other officer, in my own command that I could have put in charge of it. And this, I just had a real rough period because we were on a very tight schedule, to do our tests, and pass them, and ship, that's what you were saying, a short time it was. See, we had just been filled when I went there, with brand new soldiers, but boy, were they great! We got all the people out of colleges. What they did, they called that the ASTP Program; the college, they'd send a lot of these boys we had very smart ones, off to do

programs in colleges. I never did understand why this was done, but they had. I received an influx of soldiers all of them of college material, high school graduates with one, two, and three years of college. And all you had to tell those people was just one time. And they were anxious, they were ready. They were anxious, tell them one time and that was all. Greatest bunch of enlisted people I have ever commanded. They were just great. And we had a lot of fine, non-commissioned officers, because that division had been cadre'd three or four times. I forget how many times, but you know, each time you're called on to send a cadre, you always keep back the key people, that you think are the best non-coms, and of course, you give them a good one, but not your best. So, I had in this division artillery, I had in the enlisted ranks what was left of the best. That wasn't true in the officer ranks. I had some problems in the officer ranks. I didn't have the best officers. I had some damn good ones, though, and strangely enough, I had a great number of Purdue graduates where they had a very fine artillery ROTC program. I don't mean, I said Purdue, I had a few Purdue, but Princeton graduates, Princeton and Purdue. My best officers all came from Princeton or Purdue. And they were good they were good, but I was having a terrible time with these battalions. I was just working night and day. My wife wasn't out there, I left her in Washington. And she was sick when I left. She was in the hospital. But she understood, she's always understood these things. I was having a terrible time with these battalions. Just force them into getting ready, you know, feeling the whole weight of this thing. And I had a young S-3, I had made this fellow my S-3 over the protest of the Division Staff because I had demanded that they promote him to a major. He was only 22 years old. Just smart, sharp as a tack. He had graduated from Purdue at the age of 18, cum laude. In electrical engineering. I see him now occasionally. His last

big job was head of General Electric Research and Development. He's been with them for years, and he is now a major general, reserve; commands that division up in Northern New York. Laddie Stahl was his name. Well, I got him made a major, as I say, against the protest of a number of people. And Laddie was sitting with me one day and I said, "Laddie, these people, I just . . . " He said, "General," I wasn't a general, he said, "Colonel," and I wasn't even a full colonel, I was a lieutenant colonel, "You, and I'm going to tell you this, I shouldn't say it, but you're trying to command all your battalions. You've read, and I've read, and we all know that when you have a unit, you command the unit, you don't command the parts of the unit. Put the heat on these battalion commanders. Scare the hell out of them, and make them do the job." I said, "Laddie, you never said anything truer in all your life and that's exactly what's wrong with me right now. I'm trying to command battalions, and that's not my job. From now on, I don't command battalions. They either cut the buck, or I'll get new battalion commanders." I let this be known, that day, and from then on I had no more trouble. They commanded their battalions, and I commanded them. And it worked out fine, and we passed every test, didn't fail a single test. And went overseas.

INTERVIEWER: Didn't you make colonel in that time, too?

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, there's a story connected with that. It's rather unusual, when I left Africa, left the Corps over there, General Bradley had called me in and said, (He was in command of the Corps by then) said, "You've been ordered back and General McNair, I know, wants you back in Army Ground Force Headquarters, and the minute you get there, they'll promote you. I know your name is in and you're on the promotion list, but I need your promotion to colonel for Medaris, my Ordnance Officer. I want to promote him to a colonel, he's done such a good job." This is the Medaris who was in the missile business later on. I said, "General Bradley, you

run the show, I don't. I'll do whatever you want." You know how you pass this thing off. So, I lost my promotion there and I got back to Ground Force Headquarters until they'd been there a year, or more.

INTERVIEWER: Who had the authority to promote at that time?

GEN HAMLETT: The Department of the Army, on request. I never did quite understand to tell you the truth, the promotion policies. They were different. I had classmates that were promoted back in '41, to full colonel, you know, as soon as this ball started rolling, and others that went all through the war as lieutenant colonels. It just didn't make sense. But, I was there as a lieutenant colonel, when the new Army Ground Force Commander, I say new, the man that was put in there after McNair, came out to Fort Chaffee to inspect, or Camp Chaffee, to inspect our division. And we were in the last throes of the tests and everything, and we were doing all right. Now, I'm trying to think of this general's name; Lear, Ben Lear, and Ben Lear was an old Cavalry type, and I'd know Ben later down in the 1st Cavalry Division. As a matter of fact, I had worked with him one time on a maneuver down in South Texas as a liaison officer. And he had come to ground forces before I left, and I had been out on a couple of trips with him, inspection trips. So, I went up to this little party they had for him, for the officers to meet Ben Lear, and shook hands with him and said, "Hamlett, you were with me in Ground Forces." I said, "Yes." He said, "What are you doing here?" I said, "I'm commanding the Division Artillery." He said, "Well, the Division Artillery Commander is supposed to be a colonel." I said, "Yeah, I wish he was." He said, "Well, why aren't you a colonel?" I said, "Because your headquarters has some kind of fool policy that they don't promote people who should be promoted." I'd had a couple of drinks and that's what I told him. I said, "For example, you have one of the best officers in

your headquarters, who's still a lieutenant colonel, who's 2 years ahead of me on the regular list." "Who's that?" I said, "Colonel Barnes, Verdie Barnes. He's with you on this trip." He said, "God damn. Let me get ahold of Barnes, I want to find out about this." I said, "I wish you would general, because it would sure help a lot of us who feel that we've been left behind in this business."

I was promoted a week later. (Laughter) And so was Verdie. He got a kick out of this. You know Barnes, he was commander of the school at one time.

INTERVIEWER: Well how was your landing back in Europe again after the training at Chaffee?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, it was a very interesting period. However, this division, 6th Armored Division never did get into any combat as such. We had a little shooting and bushwacking from time to time in our advance into and through Germany and wound up, the division wound up in Czechoslovakia. Our last mission was to secure Plzen, Czechoslovakia. And we went in there with no orders as to how to treat the civil population. A very confusing thing. We didn't know whether we were invading enemy territory or friendly territory. And there's a great deal of difference. But the Czechs took this into their own hands and made it friendly territory. And I'll never forget, I had command of part of the column rolling up the road into Plzen and I was at the head of my column as we came into the town of Plzen, it was just like a big holiday. We were liberating these people. They were happy and coming out to greet us, and I had a real good looking jeep driver. Corporal Vickeroff. Fine looking young man, and I noticed that all of the pretty girls, when they saw us coming, they would get over on Vickeroff's side and I got all the women with babies on my side. (Laughter) They were kissing us as they came through, you know, a very happy period. Unfortunately, we were held up in Plzen. Of course, this was all part

of the big picture that we didn't know anything about, and neither did the Czechs. But it was a very, very upsetting thing to me because we could have gone right on into the capital of Czechoslovakia, what is the capital?

INTERVIEWER: Prague.

GEN HAMLETT: Prague. We could have rolled right on into Prague the next day. No trouble. The German Army was between Prague and our column, but these people had had it. They didn't want to fight anybody, but they wanted to get away from the Russians, and they came to my outpost, I had an outpost on the side towards Prague of the city, and requested an audience, and I forget, one of my commanders was out there, or maybe, I think the division handled that, this was out of my sector. We had a conference, said, "We have repaired the bridges so that you people can roll right on through. There will be no interference with you whatsoever, if you'll come through and secure Prague. And we'll withdraw under your command." This was their offer. Throw down their arms, anything. As a matter of fact, it was one of my officers, because he brought a pistol back to me, a Walters pistol that this German commander gave him, or one of the German commanders, did, to take to his superior officer to show his good intentions. Well, the Czechs there, and there were a few old Czech military types, that had put on their uniforms, for release as far as they were concerned, from German rule and one of these old gentlemen, with the insignia of a major general, and I don't know his name, I didn't even know his name then, though I was told his name, came to my headquarters, I had set up my headquarters in the Grand Hotel in the middle of Plzen and said, "Look," through an interpreter, "You people don't understand what's going on. If you permit the Russians to come into Prague, this country is going communist. And it's just that simple. But if you get in there ahead of them, and establish the proper

democratic type of government, we can stave this off." And I reported this back to the 3rd Army Headquarters, to my division headquarters, I'm sure it got back to them because that night we got the word, "No further advance. Hold where you are. No further advance." And we weren't permitted to advance into Czechoslovakia. Why? It had something to do with the big picture. Agreements had been made before, but it assured that Czechoslovakia would go communist. Who's mistake was that? I don't know. But it was somebody's.

INTERVIEWER: Did you ever sight any Russian Army units in this operation?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, yeah, sure. We were eyeball to eyeball with them right up in Czechoslovakia along the Sudetenland, and we had exchange visits with them. They were something, those Russians. That was the first time that I had ever seen a Russian before. But they came down in their; I'll never forget, General Pierce, got in touch with me one afternoon and said, "Please come over, I've got a Russian Division Commander and his staff are going to be here tonight and we're going to have drinks with them, and feed them, and I'd like for you to come over." Well I did, and we were really outnumbered by the Russians. They brought a lot of people in, in jeeps and whatnot, and do you know what they did? They stole all the gasoline off our jeeps. They did. They stole all the gasoline cans and all the gasoline off our jeep and left in a roar of laughter. There wasn't a damn thing we could do about it because we were outnumbered. (Laughter) Well, it was a very rewarding experience in many ways to be the liberator of something in that war. And, we settled, I say we settled, we drew back into Sudeten, Germany, and I became the military governor of an area I don't know how many square miles were involved, but I had 187 towns and villages in which I had to put some type of representation. So, when you have that many places to garrison you get down to non-commissioned officer rank, and I

had some towns that were being run by corporals, and by golly they did a good job. They did all right. About two weeks after we had arrived there, and by the way, we were right in the middle of a state of anarchy. There were a lot of D.P. Camps (Displaced Persons) all through Sudeten, Germany. There were also a lot of Hungarians, which were old settlers in there. Some of those Hungarian families; and I occupied a shooting lodge that belonged to the Apponiae family, and the Count Apponiae was living in the basement, he and his wife, and two children, and she was a very beautiful girl. They had connections in the United States, as a matter of fact, I learned later, that the Countess Appoinae beat me back to the United States. She was in New York when I arrived there. I was told, I never saw her. Anyway, right about, I guess it was 2 weeks after we had been there, the communists out of Prague moved into my area one day, in two big, black Russian automobiles. Came into one of the towns, the largest town, I was on the outskirts of this town in my headquarters, which I had garrisoned the town with a major or a captain, who was a battery commander in one of my outfits, and announced to this young captain that they were taking over the town government and that they wanted him to move out, and all this business, and of course, this young fellow was really upset, got on, we had communications by that time, he called me and he wanted to know what to do, and I said, "Just sit tight, I'll be there, Coming right in." I went in and I don't mind admitting it, the only people that you could find in this state of anarchy that we had fallen into, who could get things straightened out were the former leaders in there. The Burgermeister, who was a Nazi, and his secretary, who was a Nazi, and, but who else? You didn't have anybody else to deal with. So, I had a Nazi Burgermeister and a secretary, a girl named Hilda, I don't know what her

last name was, they were Sudetan Germans. Actually doing the work that had to be done to get the milk deliveries going, to get the banks opened and get food to people, who were starving to death. See, you had to do something, but I was dealing with the Nazis. Now, I'll tell you another story if we have time about that, and how it backfired on General Patton. I went into town, and sure enough, here was 2 carloads of greasy looking characters, and I didn't know whether they were Russians or Czechs, but they were hard-nose communist types. And this girl that I was telling you about, the Nazi secretary, was big, ugly, big bosom, German girl, but smart, and mean, and I said, "Tell me what this is all about." She said, "They're from the Nazi headquarters in Prague and they're moving in here, or think they are, and they're making a show of force really. The only thing that you can do is to run them out."

INTERVIEWER: The Nazi party of Prague or did you say they were communist?

GEN HAMLETT: Communist. If I said Nazi, I mean these were communists. So, I said, "All right. I'll run them out. You just turn to them and in the meanest language you can use, and tell them that if they aren't out of this town in 1 hour, I'll have all of them shot." She said, "I know exactly how to say that." And she turned to them, and I don't know exactly, she took longer than that to say it, but you could see the blood drain out of their faces. No arguments. They got in their automobiles and headed for Prague, and I never had any more trouble with the Communists.

INTERVIEWER: How did this type incident backfire on General Patton, sir?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, you remember that there was something, some reporter asked Patton why he was permitting people who were in the Nazi party to work in the city governments and get things done. And Patton had sent his inspector general down.

I never knew why this guy came down to inspect me in this town of Klatovy, and in discussing what I was doing, and how we were doing it, and whatnot, I think he just wanted to make a trip to Sudeten, Germany and see what it was like. I told him that I had been forced to use Nazis. I knew they were Nazis, but I said, "I've got no one else to use." And I would like to have, I think that somebody up there in Army Headquarters should make a judgement on this, and tell us whether this is good or bad. I said, "I can't do anything else. I'm not going to do anything else until I'm told not to." He had raised some voice against this. I said, "Not only that, I have no orders about the treatment of civilians. None whatsoever." I said, "I'm just working on my best judgement of what to do. And I can't get anything out of my division headquarters because they have no orders. And I think it's high time that somebody started making policies for the occupation of this part of Czechoslovakia if we're going to stay in here." Apparently, I've always thought, he went back to 3rd Army Headquarters, and this matter came up; what are you going to do when you don't have anybody to run anything but Nazis? General Patton agreed to this. Well, this reporter had questioned him about doing this. He said, "What else are you going to do? These are the only people who are around that are efficient enough to do the job," and this got into the American newspapers and got old Patton in a hell of a mess. Do you remember that? That he was siding with the Nazis. He wasn't, and I always thought that maybe I had gotten the poor fellow in this mess by telling his inspector general what I was doing.

INTERVIEWER: This completes Reel number three, interview number three with General Barksdale Hamlett.

SECTION 4

INTERVIEW WITH GENERAL BARKSDALE HAMLETT

by

Colonel John J. Ridgway
Lieutenant Colonel Paul B. Walter

THIS RECORDING IS IN CONNECTION WITH THE MILITARY HISTORY RESEARCH COLLECTION SENIOR OFFICER ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM. THE SENIOR OFFICER BEING INTERVIEWED IS GENERAL BARKSDALE HAMLETT. THE INTERVIEWERS ARE COLONEL JOHN J. RIDGWAY AND LIEUTENANT COLONEL PAUL B. WALTER, BOTH FROM THE US ARMY WAR COLLEGE CLASS OF 1976. TODAY'S DATE IS 10 MARCH 1976. WE ARE AT HILTON HEAD ISLAND. THIS IS INTERVIEW #4, REEL #4.

INTERVIEWER: General, when we left off the last time you were discussing your career as it was developing in Czechoslovakia. Would you care to pick up there and continue that?

GEN HAMLETT: I believe we were talking at the time about the fact that I had been given, you might say, command of the military district which comprised 187 towns and villages; and it had been necessary for me to station someone in each one of these towns and villages. And actually for my chiefs in these towns, I got down as low in the order of command as corporals and I must say that I have never seen a group of young Americans that acquitted themselves any better. They did a tremendous job because we were faced with anarchy. Really, there was . . . the banks were closed, the stores were closed. We had to get milk some way for the children, and food, and all that, and these people pitched in and did a tremendous job. There were a number of rather amusing incidents that I might cover that took place during that period. I remember one, the division commander, General Pierce, invited me up to Marienbad where the division headquarters had been established to have dinner with him and some of his opposing Russian commanders. I know there was one division

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commander there and several colonels--these Russians I am speaking of-- and we had a very nice dinner and enough vodka and whiskey from our supplies to get quite convivial, but the funny thing about this was when the Russians left, they stole all of our gasoline off the jeeps and trucks parked in the area, and even some of the clothes and supplies that we had in the house where we had the dinner. But they thought nothing of it. The Russians thought this was funny and we didn't want to start an incident over this and actually there was no one but the colonel and myself . . . the general and myself and a couple of soldiers . . . by the late hour they left, we couldn't have stopped them anyway. So, that was my first meeting with Russians, and although I found them very convivial, though we couldn't discuss many problems because of the language barrier, it was a lot of fun.

INTERVIEWER: Did you finish out your command as the Division Artillery Commander in that civil marshal-law role?

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, that is correct. That is where I finished my tour with the 16th Armored Division. Soon after we had gone into Pilzen, the 2nd Division moved in and took over, in that area, the Pilzen area, from us and that is when we were moved back into Sudaten, Germany, and I was in this role of military commander of the Sudaten district which was full of DP camps and everything else. General Harmon, whom I had known in North Africa, and I believe I spoke about meeting over there, was commanding this corps under which the 2nd Division was operating and I was very happy to become reacquainted with General Harmon, who had a great deal of influence later on in my life, which I'll cover when we get to it.

INTERVIEWER: You took over then as the Group Commander of the 190th Field Artillery Group for a one-month period?

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, this group was one of the units selected for the invasion of Japan and actually I was given command to get them ready for their role in the invasion of Japan. The division that I was in, the 16th Armored Division, was to be broken up because we were . . . had more points--you remember the point system?--than anyone else . . . had fewer points I mean than other people, though I had a lot of points. Most of the people in the division had no points at all, because they had only been in combat a short time. The 190th Group on the other hand had a tremendous number of points among their enlisted men and officers, too. So, they were all cleaned out and sent back and I moved a great number of my division artillery people into the 190th Group. Actually, you might say, it was a continuation of the 16th Armored Division Artillery under a different name with different types of material, with 155 Howitzers and 155 guns plus an Observation Battalion in the 190th Group. And we moved into Hoenfelds for training, which was a very good artillery range, although not quite large enough for the guns. We could get good training there, and we were about ready to go into our tests when I was . . . when the Japanese folded and the invasion of Japan became nothing but a plan that didn't materialize. So, at that time they were forming what was known as the 15th Army Group in Germany under General Patton. Now, you may remember General Patton had had some problems of various kinds and he was not in the best odor with the higher commander at the time as I remember, although I had a great deal of respect for General

Patton and his ability as a commander, and had been with him in North Africa as I told you. I was ordered into this Army Group as one of the officers to write the after battle reports of World War II. That was our job really and to make recommendations about further development, tactics, weaponry, and strategy and so forth. So, I was there for about three or four months as I remember. It was a very interesting period. It took a lot of time, a lot of research. We went all over France and Germany talking to people and getting their opinions on the battles of World War II and so forth and so on, and it was a very splendid group of people--all of them knowledgeable, experienced--and I think from the 15th Army Group, rather we developed some very fine reports. I have had occasion from time to time to go back and look at them. I think the recommendations that came out of that group of people were beneficial to the Army as a whole. There were no particular instances that took place during this period. We had . . . as I said General Patton was commanding, I forget, there weren't any other officers that I remember at the time. I knew a lot of them but they were people that sort of had not lived with history.

INTERVIEWER: It seems that every war has a battle, or more than one battle, where there are some controversy. For instance, the My Lai incident out of Vietnam or the Battle for Old Baldy in Korea when you were writing an historical account at the end of World War II, were you faced with any disgraceful reports of conduct of battle at that time that you had to investigate?

GEN HAMLETT: No, no. Well, this was not our role really. We weren't looking for things of that sort. We were looking for technical and tactical

boo-boo's if you want to call them that, and when it was done right or wrong. We were not investigating any things of the sort that parallel My Lai.

INTERVIEWER: And your interest then was more as an artillery officer . . .

GEN HAMLETT: That is correct, that is correct. And in that particular period I was working with Harry Critz, who later became a lieutenant general or retired at that, and Harry and I had been friends for many years and we came to the decision or the conclusion at that time that our greatest weakness in the field artillery was the fact that the forward observer was lost most of the time insofar as orientation was concerned with respect to the fire direction centers. We determined at that time that we would somehow correct that as we went along and I am happy to report that we did, both of us, had something to do later on in getting this accomplished.

INTERVIEWER: General, you said these papers that you had the opportunity to review, if an historian were looking for these, what papers, specifically, what would he look for?

GEN HAMLETT: He would look for the reports from the 15th Army Group, US Army. Now, the 15th Army Group wasn't an Army Group at all. It was just a headquarters with all of the officers that were involved in these various studies. It wasn't the artillery, the infantry, the engineers, ordnance, quartermaster, the whole rigamarole. The studies were made by these different sections. It was set up like an Army headquarters with all the different staff sections, but the staff sections weren't executing their normal duties. What they were doing was making studies

of what had happened during World War II. After-battle reports, but they are not listed as "after-battle" reports; they were just listed as the reports of the 15th. That's when General Patton was killed there, you know, at Bad Nauheim. That's where our headquarters . . . we were occupying hotels there. So, that was a watering place for the Germans, and they had a lot of hospitals right in there and actually I was living with a German family at the time, a German doctor.

INTERVIEWER: Were you there at the time that General Patton was killed?

GEN HAMLETT: No, I had left. I had been ordered to the War College and no one could tell me why I was ordered to the French War College. I was a very poor French student and had already arranged through friends to be ordered to Vienna . . . and had a job all set up there under General Clark, whom I had known very well before, and the reason I wanted to go to Vienna was because I could get my wife sent over as soon as I could get some quarters in Vienna. Unbeknowst to me, somebody from the Department of the Army in Washington sent out orders directing me to report to the French War College for a year's schooling. I went to see General Bull who was Acting Chief of Staff for General Eisenhower at the time, and I had known General Bull quite well, and I asked him if he could do anything to get my orders changed. He assured me that it would be the simplest thing in the world, and he would have them changed right there. Well, he got on the telephone while I was still in his office and called the Adjutant General, and they hummed and hawed over the phone for a little while, and then he turned to me and said, "I'm sorry but I can't do anything about it." Of course, I asked him, "Why not? What's wrong?"

He said, "Well, General Eisenhower has just been blowing the roof off because we have been changing so many orders that arrived in here from Washington that apparently there is some feeling over there that he is being too high-handed," so he said, "We will not change any more orders no matter what they are. They come out of Washington, so you're hooked." And believe you me, I was. I had to go to Paris and live in a plush hotel and stay there for a year, going to the French War College, learning nothing except rudimentary French. I did become quite conversational with the French language, but insofar as learning anything about the military, it was a farce.

INTERVIEWER: Did you detect anything in the French attitude while you were there that the great deGaulleist movement and the restoration of Paris . . . ?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, the officers corps . . . those represented at the War College, and this was really not Ecole Superior de Guerre to the War College. It was a staff officer course that we took, and I must say a very poor one because the people who were giving this course, the instructors, were mostly what we term then Vichy French, the ones that had stayed on in France and had not been with deGaulle, and they hadn't had the experience of the modern warfare. They were still fighting World War I and this is very disappointing to those of us who had been and had the experience of the recent war. Actually, there were three factions in the French Officers Corps at the time. You had the deGaulleist, the Vichy French . . . that's called the deGaulleist, the Free French, the Vichy French, and then you had a number of people who had been in the

underground, and they all apparently disliked the other factions. I mean there were a lot of feelings among these people, although my French was not good enough to understand the nuances that occurred from time to time in staff discussions and things. It was quite obvious to Woodie Stromberg, by the way was there with me, a very fine officer who had had a lot of experience in the 3rd Infantry Division and was very good insofar as the French language was concerned, helped me considerably. He understood a lot more of this and I got some of the inside information from him. At that time we had one very interesting classmate by the way, an officer from Czechoslovakia and he was still wearing the Czechoslovakia uniform. This was before the Communists really took over in Czechoslovakia. For instance, this officer came to us . . . his name was Karl Hora . . . he had been a great tennis player, Czech tennis player . . . came to us towards the last part of the course and said, "Look, I want to tell you. I am in trouble. I am on the wanted list back in Czechoslovakia and I have got to have some way to get out of there, undercover, because Czechoslovakia is going Communist, period." He said, "It is almost there now, and it is going all the way and I can't take it, and I have got to get out of there but I must get back and straighten out some things and what can you do for me?" Well, we took this up with our people in Paris left over from World War II, the intelligence people and whatnot, and they did make arrangements which I was never told about exactly HOW they were going to do this. But later I saw Karl Hora, several years later, and actually I saw him in Tokyo, Japan, when he was in the French Foreign Legion Battalion fighting with the 2nd Division in Korea. And they did get

him out of Czechoslovakia--the French DID accept him, and the French Foreign Legion, and at the time I saw him in Tokyo he was a captain. This man later went with this same French Foreign Legion outfit into Indochina and was fighting at Dien Bien Phu when he was taken out of there for some reason. And my next meeting with Hora was in Paris, France, when he told me explicitly, "If you Americans become involved in Indochina like the French did, you are the greatest damn fools that ever lived."

INTERVIEWER: What year was that, General?

GEN HAMLETT: This was in 1955 and this was a French Foreign Legion officer who had been there.

INTERVIEWER: When you were back in the French War College, there obviously were American students. You mentioned yourself and was it Colonel Stern?

GEN HAMLETT: Herb Stern was there, Stromberg, Stern and Hamlett, but Stern's wife became quite ill during the course of the year and he was returned to the States because of her illness. Stromberg and I actually received diplomas of a sort from Ecole de Guerre on which it said we had survived the course and this is just about true. That's about all we did.

INTERVIEWER: Well, there was a great need to rebuild France.

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, absolutely, absolutely. It was quite obvious insofar as the military was concerned they needed a lot of getting together. Though there were some fine people in these various factions and I never had any feeling against the Vichy French that the French themselves had, because I felt that they were really the dupes of political leadership that had caved in without becoming the . . . the officers corps becoming too involved in it.

INTERVIEWER: Were there any other nations . . . you mentioned the

Czechoslovakian officer?

GEN HAMLETT: Yes. We had an Iranian and I forget his name, and a Netherlands officer, whose name I never could pronounce. But they were both very fine people.

INTERVIEWER: Well, you had to leave your plush hotel in Paris. You had to take your certificate of survival, and you had to return to a very favorite spot of yours, Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

GEN HAMLETT: Fort Sill, Oklahoma. I was certainly glad to get back home to be with my family and move to Fort Sill.

INTERVIEWER: How long had it been since you had seen your wife and daughter?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, I had been back, of course, for a nine-months tour during the war when I went back to Army Ground Forces. That is what it was called at that time, so I had only been away for less than two years. So that seemed like a long time in those days. We . . . I joined them in Washington, D.C., and we first were ordered to Fort Bragg, so all of our furniture that was in storage was shipped to Fort Bragg and then the orders were changed. And we were shipped to Fort Sill and that terrible Army triangle that arises from time to time . . . and we were a couple of months getting our furniture and found a little quirk in the regulations at that time; because the regulation stated, and this isn't of any historic interest, that if your orders were changed while you were on leave, on leave, you were responsible for the movement of your furniture. Fortunately, my orders, according to the dates, were changed while I was actually doing duty. So the Government had to pay for my change so far as

moving the furniture was concerned which was quite a stipend. We moved to Fort Sill and I was assigned to the Gunnery Department. At that time they had two main sections of the Gunnery Department, the advanced classes and the battery officers' class, and I became the Director of the Battery Officers Gunnery courses. General Tommie DeShazio was the Assistant Commandant of the school and General Cliff Address was the Commandant. I had known both of these gentlemen very well indeed. General Address, as you know, commanded the 1st Division at the end of the war and had been the division artillery commander in Africa, of the 1st Infantry Division, so I had been intimately associated with him. And I had known DeShazio as an younger officer, and also as the commander of an armored group in Germany at the end of the war. I was tremendously interested at the time in this gunnery problem that we had, orientation of the forward observer with respect to the fire director center. I was doing a lot of work on this myself along with other instructors there, but the two young people, and I think this is interesting, who solved this problem were Reserve officers. One an engineer by profession, and the other a salesman by profession, who were in our research and developments compartment of the gunnery course and their names were McArthur and Simpson. After being assigned this problem, when those of us who thought we knew so much about it had really given up on how we would do this, they came up with a solution inside of one week. I think this is very interesting.

INTERVIEWER: This is probably the observer-target grid?

GEN HAMLETT: That's correct. The observer-target grid as we know it. We had a fine group of officers there. Most of them were combat experience and were able to develop this very quickly. We were ready. We had this

thing within three weeks after these youngsters had come up with that target grid. We had it ready to show to anyone, to anyone we wanted to see it and we were doing proof firing all the time with it. We proved to ourselves that we had something good. About that time, and I am getting ahead of my story because . . . by this period that I am speaking of, become the Director of the Gunnery Department, and I went to England and took this information with a board and all these things along with me to the Artillery Conference of the British Army. Then I went down to Larkhill with it, and we went over it with the British Gunnery people, and you know they bought it, bingo, just like that, and as a result the British were using this system throughout their Army before it was accepted in the United States Army. It's a fact.

INTERVIEWER: I am afraid that has happened in other ways. As a matter of fact, FADAC, if you are familiar with that acronym, is another example. The British have had that in the field while we are still playing with research and development tests. General, in the years that you were Director of the Gunnery, the Army was standing down. It was going down from a nearly 3,000,000 man force down to probably a little less than a million. Now I am sure you had great officer turbulence in your advanced classes. Can you recall the quality of the type of young man that was staying in the Army in those days and going to school with you?

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, I was very interested in this particular phase of the standdown in the Army because all of us who were professionals were most interested in getting the best officers that we could to remain in the Army, and I thought it was . . . insofar as I could judge, the group of people

who were staying in the Army were far superior to those that I had encountered as a young lieutenant in 1930, who had stayed on from World War I. Now, I can't account for this really, but we were getting a very high grade of officer. Both from the officers who had been given a Regular commission as well as the officers who were still on the Reserve list, but were putting in for a Regular status. It was quite comprehensive, quite competitive and I was really . . . I felt that we were getting a real good cut across the board of the type of people that we needed. I think this has proven out since World War II that we did have a very fine officers corps, after the shakedown as it were.

INTERVIEWER: And it always seemed to take some time. I know jobs were very difficult to find when the people of the United States wanted their sons, husbands and brothers out of the service and their . . . all these men flooded the employment market and there were no jobs to be had which caused some people to stay in the Army, I think, at least for awhile, that might not have otherwise stayed. Did you have any special screening process?

GEN HAMLETT: Not so far as I was concerned as the Director of the Gunnery Department. I had to make official reports on all these officers who were requesting to . . . and certainly the ones who were trying to get a Regular commission; and we could, by these reports, have quite an influence on whether they were accepted or not.

INTERVIEWER: Did you toughen up the gunnery grading system; for example, if it took 70 to pass before, did you give harder tests or did you grade those with more . . .

GEN HAMLETT: No, this wasn't necessary actually. I think our standards insofar as the school was concerned have been very high throughout the war and remained so. I am sure that we did . . . really not feeling that we were, probably tighten up some, and we were certainly quicker to recommend getting rid of the ones who were failing in the courses. This did occur and there were a number of what you would call "chaff" who were coming along at that time and we were rather cold blooded about getting rid of them because there were so many you could be very choosy about the people that you kept.

INTERVIEWER: You had mentioned earlier other developments that you came up with in the Gunnery Department or were involved in.

GEN HAMLETT: Well, that was back before the war started when we were developing the fire direction system making it possible to mass the fires of a number of battalions very quickly which was a new concept insofar as the artillery was concerned.

INTERVIEWER: I can't recall, did we discuss on tape the graphical firing tables?

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, I told you about that. That was also developed by a Reserve officer. The reason I bring this up I would like to indicate that our Reserve officers corps is something that is VERY, VERY important to national defense.

INTERVIEWER: I don't want to draw you into anything, but there is almost a correlation here. Would you have a view, since you feel that way about Reserve officers, that a draft of a cross section of our men in the United States is better than the "all volunteer" concept?

GEN HAMLETT: I am torn between these two ideals or ideas. I was very much against giving up the draft. I didn't think at the time we went to the all volunteer forces that this was a good idea at all. As a matter of fact, I had a meeting with the Secretary of Defense and some other people. I was the President of the Retired Officers Association at the time, and we told him flat out that we thought this was a very bad idea, and I wrote letters to this effect. Both to the Secretary of Defense and as I remember to the President, as the President of the Association. I am not sure, at this time, whether continuation of the draft if we had continued it as it was done at the time of the Vietnam War, in other words bringing in so many people and keeping them anyway, with the situation that exists in the country now, whether this is a good idea or not. Certainly there are two sides to this problem. You can argue it both ways. You couldn't possibly have, in my opinion, a volunteer army unless you had the pay scales that you have at this time. We could have a lot more research and development, new material, etc., if we were still paying the pay scale of the drafted army. On the other hand, we would have more malcontents in the armed forces if we did this. So you got these balances and who am I, after being retired for over 12 years, to say who is right and who is wrong. I expressed my opinion when it started and I have had so many people since then try to convince me that I was wrong, including the present Chief of Staff of the Army for whom I have a great respect, Fred Weyand, that I wouldn't want to pass judgment on it at this time. That's really weaseling it, isn't it? (Laughter) Sounds like politicians.

INTERVIEWER: I don't think you weaseled at all.

INTERVIEWER: Of course, you're blessed down with the fact that we have had some hard times during the time that we have had a zero draft and it is going to be interesting over this next year or two . . .

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, I think it will.

INTERVIEWER: To see whether it is going to hold or not. I think that maybe the story is not all the way out yet.

GEN HAMLETT: But the thing right now that disturbs me more than anything else about this situation is the dollars and cents that are involved, and the shortage that we have in material and in the development of new weapons system.

INTERVIEWER: President Roosevelt died while you were at Fort Sill. I think history would say that he was certainly a friend of the military. Maybe a little slow to give it a proper wage at the beginning, but once it got rolling he certainly supported the buildup. Do you remember any of the reactions? Of course, there was a national reaction, but do you remember any special, significant events when President Roosevelt died?

GEN HAMLETT: No, as a matter of fact, I can't. I think that most of us who followed political developments and whatnot--I think most of the educated people of the country did at that time--realized that Roosevelt was a very sick man and that he was not long for this world. It was quite obvious when you saw pictures of him making speeches and whatnot that he was dying during his campaign. It was obvious looking in his face. Very few people expected him to live very long. I have always thought it was really a tremendous effort and something that was not understandable to me,

why he decided to run again, and why the people of this country elected him except they didn't think much of the opposition.

INTERVIEWER: What was your reaction when Harry S. Truman became your Commander in Chief?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, I don't remember any particular reaction. He wasn't too well known. Of course, the Vice Presidents have always been in the background and as far as Roosevelt was concerned, Truman was not only in the background, he was in the backroom; and this was what most of us felt that the country was being turned over to a neophyte you might say when compared to the great Roosevelt.

INTERVIEWER: Well, you got a chance to study some of the national defense policies because when you left Fort Sill, you became a student at the National War College in Washington, almost within a year after President Truman took over. Can you tell us how your year was at the National Defense College, National War College, excuse me.

GEN HAMLETT: Well, this was, as I look back on my career, one of the happiest periods of my life insofar as professional interest was concerned. I wasn't too happy because my wife was sick most of that year. She was a very sick girl, and had to have an operation, and things were not too happy insofar as our social life was concerned. Even today Fanny doesn't know many of the people that I went to school with at the War College because she wasn't at many of the parties. At that time we were very much involved in the problem of nuclear weapons, particularly in the high level school of that sort, and it was interesting to see the party lines develop among the three services at the school. I must say it was tremendously stimulating,

mentally, to clash with these different services at a level of that sort where no one was getting mad about the problem but certainly representing the thoughts of their own service, sometimes too strongly, I felt. Maybe it is my Army background, perhaps it was at the time, still is, that made me feel that the Navy and the Air Force really rode their party lines too hard while we in the Army were more or less in the middle. And actually at that time hadn't developed too good a counter thrust against the "big boom" idea of the Air Force and the big carrier deal of the Navy. Most of the real, knockdown and drag-out arguments that occurred during my year there at the school were more involved with the difference in opinion and difference in ideas and difference in strategies and so forth between the Navy and the Air Force. We were developing our limited war concept and actually it was so sensible at the time that the other two services didn't fight it too hard as the Air Force did later in development of the budget when they were trying to get all the dough for new airplanes and missiles and so forth and so on.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, there is certainly no doubt about the military value of the atomic bomb. Can you recall philosophical discussions that you were having with your students as to whether or not it was morally right or wrong to use such a devastating weapon?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, this idea was developed from time to time based on magazine articles and the press and so forth and so on, but, if you are talking about the students at the National War College, I can't remember any student there ever being in opposition to the use of these weapons on moral grounds. Maybe there were some there, but they didn't express

themselves at least loudly enough to be recognized with the rest of the school. No, I think that most of us took this development as philosophically as military people are supposed to, and felt that this was just another weapon in the arsenal that could be used, but we better be damn careful about how we used it, when and where, and against whom, and it is still the same way.

INTERVIEWER: Of course, we were the sole possessors at this time in 1947-48 and the cold war was beginning to develop.

GEN HAMLETT: Right, right. But I think that all of us realized that this type of thing would be in the hands of potential enemies within a decade anyway and it was in our thinking, we were not thinking that we were the only people in the development of our logic in war gaming and whatnot, did not give us the sole possession of this weapon. We just couldn't believe that other nations wouldn't come up with it.

INTERVIEWER: And did you think that Russia would be the first to develop it?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, I think it was obvious that they would be. Yes, because they had the wherewithal to do it, and as I remember they had latched on to some of those German scientists who had been very well along in the development in Germany, heavy water and some other things. I'm no scientist, so I don't remember exactly, but as I remember we gave them the ability to develop this within a very short time.

INTERVIEWER: The United States did that?

GEN HAMLETT: Yes. We at the War College, we were students and I am sure our opinions were based on intelligence that we had gotten from our own

military sources and CIA sources because we had CIA people there in the school with us, and also at that time we had British contingents, British and Canadians were going to the National War College. They were later cut off because of the feeling among our South American and other European allies that we were being too nice to the British and the Canadians. I always felt it was a mistake not to keep on having them there frankly. They provided a lot of input--good people.

INTERVIEWER: The buildup of communism in the Far East was probably a subject for discussion while you were a student at the National War College.

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, I wrote my term paper on the Far East and I was talking to Deutsch about that not long ago. He was one of the reviewers of the paper and I think he remembered. We were discussing at my conclusion, after writing my paper on the Far East was, "Let's get the hell out of there and let them stew in their own juice."

INTERVIEWER: Dr. Hal Deutsch; he remembered that when we had breakfast together. He said that was one he still remembers--the paper and the conclusion. He thinks the world of you. Well, after . . .

GEN HAMLETT: Well, actually this had some background that I might bring up another name here. When I was with General McNair and Army Ground Forces, when I had been brought back from North Africa during the war, I used to go up to his office from time to time to discuss the problems of training. I had been his aide so I felt close to him and he felt rather close to me, I think, and would discuss things with me that I am not sure he discussed with other people. But he made a statement one day when we were talking about the Far East and what was going on out there in the

world. He said, "I hope to goodness that when this war is over, we'll withdraw our forces from all those islands out there, and draw in our strings from the Far East because we don't have any national reason for doing so, for staying there." And I always remembered that because I thought General McNair was one of the smartest people that I had ever known. He was smart in a lot of ways, not just military, but he had a lot of political sense, too.

INTERVIEWER: The objective of the National War College back in 1948 was to prepare officers for assignments at Secretary of the Army and Department of Defense and Department of Army . . .

GEN HAMLETT: At higher commands. All of us felt that having been selected for the War College that our chances were greatly enhanced for promotion and getting ahead in our services. It wasn't always true.

INTERVIEWER: You were already a colonel when you attended the National War College.

GEN HAMLETT: That's correct. I was a colonel. We had had the . . . at that time there had been some general officers before . . . I can't remember any general officer in my class, but the class before, I know, it had some general officers in it. And then they changed the policy not to order any general officers there after that year as I remember . . . but you see we had a lot of young colonels then. This had been rapid promotion during World War II, and they had not been reduced in rank down from my class on up. All of us had kept our rank of colonel. It was just below the Class of '30 that they knocked them back to lieutenant colonels rank when they had revision of rank structure in the Army. So

we had a lot of young colonels at that time.

INTERVIEWER: That was very interesting because there was a significant reduction in grade immediately following World War II.

GEN HAMLETT: That's correct, but the cutoff line was the Class of 1930; and I am not talking about just the Class of 1930 of West Point, I am talking about those who came in and were commissioned in 1930.

INTERVIEWER: Well, sir, you finished up the National War College, and you're heading off to the Far East, the place that you said we should stay out of. What was your reaction to those orders?

INTERVIEWER: Let's see, this was about December of '49.

GEN HAMLETT: Actually, I had asked for this assignment. Never having been involved in the Far East in any way except as a young lieutenant out in Hawaii, I wanted to learn more about this area, and probably this term paper that I had written and made these assumptions and so forth was partially responsible for this feeling. And I did have one of my closest and best friends throughout my entire career was the G-1 on MacArthur's staff at the time and he had come back to the States and had proposed that I request assignment there. And if I got the assignment, then he could make it possible for me to be assigned to a unit or to a staff section, and it would be a staff section because they weren't assigning any of us to units. We were going to higher level staff work or over into the Pentagon, and if I had an assignment, then I could get concurrent travel. That was another of these regulations that were in vogue at the time. Well, this occurred. I asked for the assignment to the Far East. I was ordered to the Far East. I immediately received orders back from the

Far East assigning me to G-3, GHQ. Well, we did get concurrent travel. We did go out to San Francisco with our daughter and boarded a ship, and believe it or not were on that ship for 27 days before we got to Japan. We took the Far East tour. We went to Hawaii, to Guam, to the Philippines, to Okinawa, to Tokyo. That was the trip. I was certainly tired of being aboard ship by the time we reached Japan and we reached Japan in the middle of a typhoon. And we were taken off the ship and put in quarters in a very small hotel; and one thing I remember about it had big picture windows all around and those windows--it was the first time I had ever seen glass bend from the force of the wind, and you could actually see the windows blow in and out from the force of this wind. Well, our daughter, and a lot of other people, were very frightened with this, and I'll be quite honest and say I wasn't comfortable at all nor was my wife. But this didn't last but two more days with torrential rains and whatnot, but I'll never forget our welcome to Japan in the middle of a typhoon. Well, when I went to report to the G-1, my friend, General Biderlinden, one of the really great people that I knew during my service in the Army, Bill Biderlinden. I first knew him as a captain in the 15th Field Artillery when I was a 1st Lieutenant and he and his wife Anne have been very, very close to us all our lives, since that time, I mean. Anyway, I reported to him and he said, "You know, we have had quite a battle whether you go to G-4 or G-3, and knowing your background, I thought you would learn more in G-4, so I have gotten your orders changed with everybody's agreement finally . . ." Because I had known the G-3 before, who was an artilleryman, General Marress, General Ward Marress, a great

fellow, and he had asked for me and I had been assigned to G-3. But Biderlinden then had changed the whole business cause he felt that I should learn something about logistics. And looking back on it, I am certainly very happy that he did this because it was a great education for me, and I think for any young officer to get in logistics. There are too many of us who try to stay purely operational side of the military and be an S-3, G-3's, and commanders, rather than learn something about the really important side of every combat situation, is how you get ammunition and food and move the troops, etc. So I am very happy about my tour in GHQ, the Far East, and the G-4 section of that staff.

INTERVIEWER: You just made a statement concerning the professional development of officers, and in effect you said you think cross assignments between operations, training and logistics, is very valuable and profitable both to the officer and to the Army.

GEN HAMLETT: Right.

INTERVIEWER: You know today they're getting away from that under a system called OPMS. I know you feel like you are in no position to criticize, but based on what you said I think you would probably disagree with that. By the way I disagree with it wholeheartedly and I had to implement it!

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, I think it is a bad thing for the services, particularly the Army, for officers to be put in a compartment and kept there throughout your career. You don't come up with leaders who understand really, the broad structure of the situation when you get into movement of troops, supply, and combat, and the whole rigamarole of battle. You just don't

have the background to come up with a good decision if you have been compartmented all during your career in my opinion.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, what was General MacArthur's reputation at the time you arrived at his headquarters?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, I would say that MacArthur's reputation, insofar as MacArthur, was that most of the people who served on his headquarters had the highest regard for him, though there was a great deal of criticism too about his methods of operation. MacArthur was a very unusual person. Let's face it, MacArthur wasn't exactly a common man. He was a very uncommon man in my opinion. What were some of his failures? Well, in the opinion of many of us on his staff he never had enough contact with people on the staff. He did all of his business through his Chief of Staff. None of us ever saw him. During my period in GHQ, I actually spoke with General MacArthur only three times, and yet I was only two echelons away from him on the staff and had been in his office many times, talking with the Chief of Staff. But you never saw General MacArthur; we didn't, people on the staff, except going and coming from the DiEachi Building to his quarters.

INTERVIEWER: And that was over a two-year period?

GEN HAMLETT: A two-year period. I never saw him outside of his office in the DiEachi Building in that two-year period, except on getting in and getting off the elevator.

INTERVIEWER: How did he spend his time? Was he an office . . .

GEN HAMLETT: He was in his office.

INTERVIEWER: All the time or was he out running around . . .

GEN HAMLETT: No, he never went anywhere as far as I know except from the DiEachi Building to his quarters. He was in his office or in his quarters and . . .

INTERVIEWER: Yet, he was only seeing the Chief of Staff primarily or were they ushering people in and out of his office?

GEN HAMLETT: Chief of Staff primarily. He did have people on the staff who had been with him for a long, long time, whom I suppose he saw daily and talked with. One of them was his aide, Colonel Bunker, who has made recent comments about MacArthur's being fired, if you remember the incident that the papers covered. When was it, Wake Island meeting or some place out in the Pacific; and then there was his G-2, Willowby. He saw him quite often I understand and the man who was with him as his aide right up until his death, General _____. But those were his intimates and those were the people that he dealt with and they dealt with the rest of the staff. I don't remember in my entire two years there that he ever visited troops at all, ever saw any troops. Now after the outbreak of war in Korea, he did show up in Korea several times. I don't remember how many. He did leave Japan and met the President, I believe twice. But you know you can't condemn MacArthur for the way he handled things as long as he was successful. Success is its own criteria. Let's go back and look at Japan and compare it to the occupation of Germany. What happened in Japan? The Russians sent a lot of people in there. They were all for getting all the equipment they could out of Japan, Manchuria, and really wrecking the whole business. MacArthur, and this is one of the things he has been criticized for, put

those people on airplanes, or got in touch with Moscow as I remember the story, and I don't know exactly how he did it. And they sent planes; and he moved those Russians out of Japan with a fighter escort and sent them back into Vladivostok and sent word to Stalin, and I know this is true. I have been told that it was done by people whom I can believe. It was long before I got over there, that he would be permitted "X" number representatives in Tokyo, period. And that is all the Russians that ever showed up after that in Japan. It was a very small mission in Tokyo, and we never saw any of them. They were just non-existent as far as GHQ was concerned. MacArthur ran the show in Japan; he ran the show. Now there were British representatives and Australian representatives there, and they did become involved in what we were doing, and I never heard any gripes from them. They were given areas for recreation and this sort of thing. They didn't want to keep any troops over there. There were very few Australian or British troops because of the expense of doing so. The Japanese regarded MacArthur as something of a hero really, and he was their new Emperor and lived this sort of role as the Emperor of Japan and it was a very fine way to handle Japanese. We had no problems with the Japanese, none. There was no problem. They were docile; they were very cooperative. We got into the Korean War, just for instance--let me go back a little. After the war, there had been a lot of equipment and whatnot brought in from the outlying islands. Clothes, vehicles, all types of things that were war materials, yes, but not combat things. The Japanese were destitute. They didn't have any food. They didn't have any clothing. They didn't have anything. And through the staff section

of GHQ, this equipment and clothing, and all this sort of business was turned over to the Japanese. The Japanese, however, and don't ever short-change the Japanese, they are very smart people; did not flood, if you want to call it that, the market by just distributing all this stuff immediately. They gave it out here, there, and there, where it was needed that wouldn't interfere with the development of their own economy, which was a smart business. The Korean War started, and as I told you a few minutes ago, I was Chief of the Supply Division, GHQ, and I received word that a member of this Japanese distribution agency--and I don't remember the name of it, everything was alphabetic at the time and I can't remember the name--wanted to see me. And I said I would be very happy to have him and this came through our civilian side of our headquarters there, and this gentleman, an American State Department man, came down with this information and in a day or two this Japanese--I remember he was a retired Admiral or Admiral without work, without portfolio--and this man from our headquarters, a civilian, came down with a tremendous list of things. And there were things that we needed because here we were fighting a war with no supplies in our depots and just a trickle coming in from the States of things that were essential. Particularly after the Korean Army had been almost completely washed out, left all their equipment north of the river and Seoul, etc., and we were in bad shape. This equipment included sleeping bags, shoes, 150,000 pair of combat boots. I remember this quite well because we had a lot of barefooted Koreans on our hands that we were trying to work back into a respectable Army over there. So we had these boots to use; we had all types of clothing,

military clothing, and all-in-all it amounted to, as I remember the figure, \$31,000,000 worth of equipment that the Japanese came and said, "Look, we have got this. Yes, we need it, but you need it worse than we do. We would like to turn it back to you." Well, this was a godsend and I said, "Well, now how will we move this?" And they said, "Don't worry, we'll move. You tell us where you want it." And that is what happened. The Japanese moved that out of their warehouses and took it to the ports and other places where we wanted it for distribution for the proper people to get it. It is an amazing story, really. Another amazing story of that period in Japan which has never been told really to the American public although there has been this article and that article. It was known as the island "roll-up." I became quite involved in this because before I took over the supply division I had been given a staff responsibility for overseeing, you might say, this island "roll-up" which was really being done by our logistics section down in Yokohama under General Weible, General Walker Weible, who was a great officer. But I was intimately concerned because I had to go out to all the islands and really see what was going on in order to keep the G-4 apprised of what progress was being made. We had a fleet. They called it the SKAJAD Fleet commanded by one Navy commander and he had . . . as I remember the figure, 23 LST's all manned by Japanese crews. There wasn't an American on any of those boats or ships, and those were the people who went out to the islands, picked up all this equipment and moved it back into the Yokohama-Tokyo area for rebuild. We had at one time so many trucks, jeeps and trailers in a tremendous big field out at Yokusta, near the Yokusta

Naval Base, that we couldn't count them. Every time we would send somebody out to count them, they would get confused. There were so many. So we took an aerial photograph and measured off one square inch and then outlined this one square inch with white engineer tape on the ground and had a man go in, a crew go in, and count the number of vehicles in this square inch. Then we made a grid and multiplied the square inches out by the number of vehicles and that is the way we determined something like 60,000 vehicles in this field. Now that was the equipment that was used for the first two years of the Korean War--a year and a half, it was--rebuilt. We set up a dis-assembly line, and an assembly line, and we run for let's say two weeks on dis-assembling them and all these parts would go into bins for rehabilitation. Those that weren't any good, throw them away. At the same time, or after we got started, we had an assembly line over on the other side of this tremendous building. Now, these lines were engineered and developed by two young people from Detroit--two young engineers who had been working with Ford Motors. One of them was the brother of an old friend of mine and that was coincidental. Everybody else on the line was Japanese, and they rehabilitated thousands of vehicles, thousands of vehicles. The engines were taken to another plant where they were disassembled, reworked, rebored, new piston rings, and so forth and so on, and brought back over. And we assembled them, and all of that equipment was sent into Korea and we used every darn bit of it. Not only this occurred, and those by the way were the first powered assembly lines the Japanese had ever seen. They had always done their work, I think the word for it is "Bay Assembly." In other words you put something

in a bay and then bring the parts to it and build it up instead of putting the frame on the line and then slowly bringing it along under power where you attach things from both sides. All our Detroit manufacturers started by Henry Ford, and these Japanese came from all over Japan to look at that assembly line to learn how to do this. Another thing very interesting about this period . . . and let me say I am not taking credit for any of this, I am just telling you what happened. I happened to be a staff officer who was in the middle of all of it and had my particular duties, but I certainly was not the brains behind all this. The various staff sections did it under General Weible down in our logistics command. They did tanks the same way. We brought tanks in that were overgrown by the jungle, drag them out and put them on our LST's and bring them in and put them in a plant that we had for rehabilitating tanks. Now, this wasn't done by an assembly line; this was Bay work. We did everything, antiaircraft gun, field artillery, everything. You can't imagine what impact the help that we got from the Japanese . . . we were paying them, of course, to do this. But they were absolutely cooperative and as far as I know there was never one bit of sabotage in any of these plants. None whatsoever. It was to their best interest too, of course. They didn't want to be overrun by Communists coming in from Korea, etc. They were afraid of this. They were afraid of this. A great deal of our intelligence for the Korean campaigns came from Japanese sources, from former military types and civilian types too, who had lived in Korea; who had been in Manchuria; who knew the coastal waters, etc. Great thing, they would come in and volunteer this information. The point I am making

here is that I think that when we started out talking about MacArthur, I think that some other type of commander other than MacArthur taking over Japan might have made a shambles of it, whereas he understood those people and he understood their philosophy and background, and he really did a tremendous job in conditioning them to this type of assistance to us.

INTERVIEWER: All of this rebuild, General, certainly helped us in our war effort--how about the Japanese? Did they gain something from this, too, do you feel?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, I do very definitely. Let me add one more thing which ties into this. At the time I am talking about during the Korean War, we were doing a tremendous amount of procurement in Japan on the Japanese market and buying all types of things. A great deal of it for sale in the post exchange, such as cameras. I remember quite well the Cannon camera, which is known all over the world, was one of the real good sellers in the post exchange. We were having a tremendous amount of trouble with these cameras being returned for mechanical breakdowns. We sent a man from Kodak people who came over for this particular purpose. We had asked Kodak to send this man over to look at their plant to see what we could do. He found that actually the Japanese here again were doing Bay work where they would lay up a lot of parts and a girl would sit in front of a desk and put this camera together, and then if the shutter clicked, it went in a box and was sold. Well, he helped the Japanese set up an assembly line for cameras with periodic control points--quality control. And in looking into other shops where we were buying things that were going bad mechanically, we found that there was very little quality control

insofar as Japanese manufacturers were concerned. So we sort of had a program of teaching them about the importance of quality control. Now this all goes, I think, into the capsule which provided the Japanese with a great deal of knowhow from our methods of manufacturing things and quality control, and a lot of other things that we taught them at this time into their great economic development over the past 15 years, 20 years, where the automotive industry has hit a peak and the other things that you get from Japan aren't breaking down anymore like they used to. You don't find people quibbling about Japanese products as they did when I was a young fellow, and you would buy something Japanese and it might last two or three weeks and it might last two or three days, but now the Japanese product is something to contend with in world trade and it wasn't before, as I remember. Well, I think we ought to get back after those remarks about those types of things. Till the beginning of the Korean War, there wasn't a great deal going on in GHQ. Before the Korean War, there wasn't anything taking place in the other parts of the world. It was peacetime soldiering in a foreign country and I might add a very, very delightful place to be with good servants, good food, and lots of places to go to play golf and swim and even fish and hunt. And I had some very fine experiences. Particularly being taken out by Japanese hunters and friends of mine that I made among the Japanese including the next door neighbor who liked to shoot and provided me with some of the best pheasant and duck shooting I ever had in my life. Mr. Takahashi, he was a former bank president and a nephew of the Prime Minister who was assassinated sometime back in the 20's, I forget the period. But he had

been a banker and had been in great trouble because he was pro-American and made it too obvious that he was, during the war, and had been kicked out of his bank and everything had happened to him but getting put in jail. And I never was sure whether he had been in jail or not, but he was a great person and I was very fond of him. Getting back to the beginning of the Korean War and . . .

INTERVIEWER: How about the intelligence buildup, General? You were certainly privvy to the highest level briefing. Do you recall the buildup or did it come as a big surprise to you or . . . ?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, I might say there was damn little briefing done in GHQ. GHQ was run by MacArthur through his Chief of Staff and you are talking about high level briefings; we weren't providing any information concerning high level intelligence, none. We only gained knowledge through being involved in something, being handed a paper and told to decipher it or some such thing as this, but the whole workings of GHQ was right in MacArthur's head. Now, that's my opinion of how that headquarters worked and I was there quite a while. You were tremendously compartmented. Willoughby in G-2 didn't talk to, as far as I know, the G-3 or G-4 much about intelligence. I am sure they got together from time to time but I never was invited as the Chief of the supply division to any kind of briefings. I got my intelligence from knowing people over in G-2 and talking with them about what was going on and the directives that came out of MacArthur's office as to what we should plan for in the way of the next strike against the Koreans. Let me get back to the beginning. This was a very peculiar situation because to my knowledge the North Korean

strikes against the South Koreans, though I am sure it had been expected for some time, and I say it had been expected for some time, no one expected it because we had withdrawn our forces from Korea, you remember. We had had a division in Korea. What division was it? The 7th Division? But in the pullback and this was in Secretary Johnson's time when they were cutting the Army back and all forces as a matter. We had withdrawn really from Korea and certainly the intelligence couldn't have indicated that we were in for an attack. This is also brought out as far as I am concerned in that I had made arrangements for my wife and some other girl to visit Korea the week that the Korean War started, and they were going over there on one of those coastal boats that we sent over each week to supply the military attache and other people that we had there in Korea. It wasn't much of a ship, a little 100-foot coastal outfit that took ice and fresh vegetables and things over and was available for people to go over and spend a week and then come back the next week. Well, this was all arranged and they were going to leave Monday morning, as I remember, and on Sunday I went down to the office just to check things. I was the executive at the time, I believe, I am not sure. But anyway I went down because General Eberly told me he wasn't going to be available on Sunday and had asked me if I would look into the shop and check on things. I got down there and someone came up in the G-3 section and said, "You are wanted, General Eberly is wanted up in General MacArthur's office." And I said, "He is not here and I don't expect him. He has gone down some place, out of town, and won't be back." Well, I got word later. "Well, you come on up to General MacArthur's office." So, I walked in

General MacArthur's front office--it was the Chief of Staff's office-- and by this time I had learned, and maybe this is why I went down to the office, that the North Koreans HAD attacked and that the South Koreans were under attack at the time, and this was a Sunday. General MacArthur walked into the office and there were four of us in there. Let's see, Pinkie Wright, who was the G-3, Almond, Chief of Staff, Willoughby, the G-2, and Hamlett, representing the G-4, and General MacArthur had some papers in his hand and said, "This is serious. Those people are going to be overrun and we have got to get our people out of there. Not only that, I understand from Willoughby . . . " and this was a conference I was in on I suppose, . . . "the South Koreans have been driven back across the river and they left all their ammunition on the other side and things are a shambles. We have got to get our people out first, and then we have got to do something to help those Koreans." And he said, "You and Wright," turned to me, Hamlett and General Wright, "Go in the next room and draw up a message to Washington telling them what we are going to do, and that we are going to lend all assistance to the Koreans and I want the 24th Division alerted . . . " And I could tell at the time the way he was talking that General MacArthur wasn't going to wait on going into Korea, that they had better get busy in Washington and support him because he was going in there and that was the beginning of the Korean War. So the first message that went to Washington concerning MacArthur's intentions, General Wright and I put together, and got on the wires that morning. From then on it was history in that we did go in. It was the 24th Division. We did get our people out who were in Seoul, and from then on we were

completely involved in Korea. That was really what I was doing for the rest of my stay in Japan and Korea because I later joined the 24th Division there who was fighting the Korean War.

INTERVIEWER: Were you in on any of the development of the plans for the invasion of Korea by US forces or the big buildup?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, yes. Yes. I was in on all of them, and as a matter of fact, I later, after being Chief of the Supply Division getting the supplies over there, and this instance I was talking about, I became the Chief of Planning for G-4, GHQ, and my staff section developed the logistics plan and there are some very interesting things that developed here and I relayed them to you because they are significant really and had something to do with what happened to MacArthur, later, as well as what happened to our forces. You remember the first really successful operation that we pulled off in Korea was the invasion at Inchon. This was really, I might say an audacious piece of strategy, and it was ALL MacArthur. He was the guy who thought about it and there were many of us including G-4 planners who didn't want to go in that far up the peninsula. We wanted to develop a landing at Kansan. I believe that's the name of the town down at the peninsula from Inchon. Inchon was a very difficult, very difficult, place to make a landing or have a landing operation. Do you realize there is a 16-foot tide in Inchon and when you got to messing around with that sort of tide, trying to put troops and equipment ashore, you have got a real problem and this was what had us very worried. Of course, the other thing that had us worried, and it had me particularly worried because this was my bailiwick, in planning, was the ammunition.

We had every bit of ammunition that we possessed in the Far East Command AFLOAT when we made the Inchon invasion. With that type of tide, and that sort of a cross-beach operation, this is a real ticklish proposition. Well, it was successful beyond all our dreams and there we were well established and with the capability of marching straight across the peninsula because there was a land area through there that was available for us to make an advance cutout to North Korean Army, and really go to town. And at that time MacArthur made a tremendous mistake. We had EVERYTHING going into Inchon. Everything moving in that direction. Everything set, and he decided to make a second amphibious landing on the other side of the peninsula. Now, he was being pressed by the commander, or commander designee, of his reserve corps, I suppose you would call it at that time, who was his Chief of Staff, General Almond, who like all good soldiers was anxious to get into combat and have a command and we were directed at this time, and we had seen this coming but couldn't do anything about it because you couldn't turn around before you had had the successful landing in Inchon, that he would command a force that would be landing on the other side of the peninsula. And among the divisions in his force was the one that we already had in Inchon, ashore, and all the supplies that we had already landed were needed for the other invasion. Well, I won't go into the details but it nearly drove us all crazy getting this thing turned around and realizing the AWFUL MESS that we were creating by the orders we were giving General Walker and his people, over there, to get this thing turned around when all Walker had to do was march across the peninsula and . . .

INTERVIEWER: This completes Reel #4, Side #1, Interview #4 with General

Barksdale Hamlett.

GEN HAMLETT: But that's what we did. I made three trips to MacArthur's office, with General Eberly's permission, to BEG them to call this thing off because of the tremendous logistics risks we were taking, the tremendous effort that we were killing with respect to Walker's Army, to no avail. General "Walking" Walker, who commanded the Seventh Army, no, no, it was the Eighth Army.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, let's continue this on the other side.

INTERVIEW WITH GENERAL BARKSDALE HAMLETT

by

Colonel John J. Ridgway
Lieutenant Colonel Paul B. Walter

THIS RECORDING IS IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE US ARMY MILITARY HISTORY RESEARCH COLLECTION SENIOR OFFICER ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM. THE SENIOR OFFICER BEING INTERVIEWED IS GENERAL BARKSDALE HAMLETT. THE INTERVIEWERS ARE COLONEL JOHN J. RIDGWAY AND LIEUTENANT COLONEL PAUL B. WALTER, BOTH FROM THE US ARMY WAR COLLEGE, CLASS OF 1976. TODAY'S DATE IS 10 MARCH 1976. WE ARE AT HILTON HEAD ISLAND. THIS IS INTERVIEW #4, REEL #4, SIDE #2.

INTERVIEWER: Continuation of previous side . . .

GEN HAMLETT: The point that we were trying to make to the high command was that, insofar as the logistics were concerned, the most feasible manner to accomplish what General MacArthur wanted to accomplish, and that is to secure Wonsan on the east coast was to go across the peninsula with the forces we already had ashore and then advance up the eastern coast. Actually, this proved out later. When by the time we were landing troops in Wonsan from the new amphibious invasion, we already had a Korean Division, South Korean Division, moving into Wonsan.

INTERVIEWER: At the same time the attack was going on on the other side?

GEN HAMLETT: At the same time we were landing forces from the new attack that was being commanded by General Almond. Now these forces after landing were directed to move towards the Yalu River and this is where the Marine Division and the 7th Division and other troops that were put ashore there became strung out on the route to the Yalu when they were suddenly attacked by the Chinese armies that had been sent across the Yalu to stop them.

INTERVIEWER: Could we return just a minute, sir, before we get into that to the controversy--how did MacArthur handle the controversy and who were some of the officers who approached him on the . . . and advised him as to the advisability of the two landings as opposed to the one with the . . . ?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, the Chief of Staff who had been the Assistant Chief of Staff to General Almond was General Doyle Hickey. And General Hickey told me in person that he had been in and discussed this whole operation numerous times with General MacArthur, and General MacArthur insisted that that was the way it was to be done and there was no use in arguing anymore. The decision has been made. And naturally, the decision couldn't be reversed. We pitched in and did the best we could and actually did provide the necessary support and supplies for the Corps landing at Wonsan.

INTERVIEWER: Well, do you feel . . . let me put the question the other way. Do you . . . what do you think was General MacArthur's motive in doing this? Was it another ego trip to make another landing . . . ?

GEN HAMLETT: I have never understood it. I have never understood it and I'm giving you opinion of the younger officers who had to carry this out and all of us felt that it was a mistake. I talked to two division commanders and both of them told me that they felt that it was a mistake. On the other hand, I understand that General Almond and most of his staff felt that it was a great thing to do. Now, naturally, it was a great jump if you go from north to south from Seoul where we had our forces at that time to Wonsan. On the other hand there was nothing, absolutely nothing,

to stop an advance across the peninsula and up the coast to get to Wonsan and then start your supplies going in from there. It didn't look impossible. It was just the fact . . . and it would have been a good operation, if we hadn't had such a dirth of support for this unit and we had to rob the Eighth Army completely. They couldn't move. They had no ammunition; they had nothing in order to provide a corps enough support to make a landing at Wonsan.

INTERVIEWER: Let's hone in on that point, sir. I think history tells us the reason we went in at Inchon, of course, was to reestablish the government of South Vietnam--excuse me, South Korea. And that the landing on the northeast peninsula was for the purpose of routing the North Korean Communits and unifying the country as a whole. But there, and you have already made the point, there the line was drawn whether it was a political decision or a military decision to unify Korea and accept the risk of China entering the war. I think history says MacArthur claimed that China would not help the North Koreans. But his actions indicate that he believed they would. And as you say, a lot of good military men questioned the military wisdom of the landing of Wonsan at the time it was done, and the logistic problems that existed when it was done.

GEN HAMLETT: Well, my point that I'm making here, purely from a viewpoint of a staff officer responsible for the logistics planning, which I was at GHQ for this, . . .--I wasn't responsible; I was given the task of doing it; General Eberly was the G-4 . . .--was the fact that it was so much easier logistically to cross the peninsula and advance up the coast than it was to pull everything out and go by sea.

INTERVIEWER: And as a supply officer, you knew that any resistance, any strong resistance they run into, would really leave the American forces in a near destitute situation, or the ability to defend against a counterthrust?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, I certainly knew that our capability of supporting any type of extended operation that far north was not good.

INTERVIEWER: And, of course, they continued to press north?

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, they pressed north and then finally some of our forces did reach the Yalu River and many of our units were surrounded and cut off up there and had a terrible time extricating themselves. And the losses were VERY heavy, losses were VERY heavy. I'm not trying to say that I told MacArthur so, I'm just trying to say that this in my estimation was the wrong way to "skin a cat."

INTERVIEWER: And you had told General Eberly this?

GEN HAMLETT: I had indeed and General Eberly had told the Chief of Staff and the Chief of Staff had told General MacArthur. Or so he told us.

INTERVIEWER: Was this--we keep coming back to this because what we are really trying to do here, I guess, is how did the G-3, for example, feel about it? Was he also on your side? In other words, was this a case where the whole staff . . . ?

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, yes, absolutely. And I was very closely associated with G-3. We couldn't do any logistics planning without tying it in with all the G-3 plans and the G-3 staff section was very much doing this in this manner. Now, there were certainly people, and people in important positions over there at the time, who felt that we were making a mistake

to go north of the 38th parallel. One officer I met on one of my trips over to Seoul to . . . on coordinating work with the headquarters there and whatnot, was General Frank Farrell. At the time he was, as I remember, was a brigadier general and he was our liaison officer with the South Korean Army. And he told me one very cold night in the hotel in Seoul, which we called the "Frozen Chosen", the Chosan Hotel, that the greatest mistake that we could possibly make in this whole Korean episode was to go north of that 38th parallel because he said, "You are going to run head-on into the Chinese." And at the time I remember I said, "Well, Frank, the word I get is that the Chinese are not coming in." And we've discussed this since then. I see Frank Farrell--he is a lieutenant general retired in Washington, D.C., from time to time--and I'm convinced now that perhaps Frank was absolutely right in what he said. But at the time I didn't think it made any difference whether we went north of the 38th parallel or not. And if it was needed in order to reunite Korea, then my feeling was that we should go but not the way we went.

INTERVIEWER: In other words yours was purely a technical staff officers position as opposed to a political position.

GEN HAMLETT: That is right! That is right! That is right!

INTERVIEWER: During those days of amphibious operations and the attempt to reestablish the country and recalling what you were discussing and studying when you were at the National War College, what were the military members of the staff thinking about in the use of nuclear weapons during the Korean War? Was there any recommendation at all?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, yes. Yes, there was a great deal of thought given to

nuclear weapons. But at that time, the matter was so hush-hush that we really weren't permitted to do ANY planning with respect to nuclear weapons. Now, you remember the last time you were down here? You were at my house with General Hasbrouck? Well, General Hasbrouck at that time was in the nuclear weapons production business and was SENT OVER there to make a survey. Now I knew it when he came over; I saw him; I talked with him and I knew why he was over there. But he wouldn't talk to me about it because this was a project the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I presumed, were involved in and they were looking the situation over to see if the nuclear weapon could be used--and this was after the Chinese came in--to help this situation. He has told me (this is Hasbrouck) since then, that the decision was made that it couldn't. One reason, they didn't have enough nuclear weapons and they didn't want to use them in this operation.

INTERVIEWER: That was opposed to Europe, in other words, the trade-off . . .

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, this is right. This is right. As I understand it, this is right. And it wouldn't hurt for you people to get a better reading on this sometime if you could talk to Hasbrouck about it. He's very knowledgeable about the planning, nuclear planning, at that time with respect to the Korean War. Whether General MacArthur was pushing nuclear weapons or not, I'm not sure. But I wouldn't doubt it. But, certainly we, at my staff level, my position on the staff, did not become involved in the use of nuclear weapons.

INTERVIEWER: Well, let me mention something here. I've done a little reading in this particular area that we are talking about and there are two schools of thought. First, that MacArthur, making strategic military

moves and many tactical military decisions, was convinced that he could unify the entire country of Korea without the use of nuclear weapons; and then after the Chinese came in and we suffered the severe withdrawal that we did, then he reconsidered. But when the political thought came in that the country would be divided instead of unified, then he again recommended no nuclear weapons. In other words, stick with the standard military solution to the problems without.

GEN HAMLETT: Well, I . . . this sounds plausible to me but I wouldn't want to comment on it because as I say, I was not privy to any nuclear planning. As far as I was concerned at the time, I was not privy to any nuclear planning with respect to the Korean War. I did know, and not because I was taken in to the higher circles and told about it, I did know that there was a lot of thought going on about this. That people were questioning whether it could be done or not, or what it would accomplish and et cetera and et cetera. And I knew that Hasbrouck was over there to make a study for the, as I understood it, the Joint Chiefs, on this matter.

INTERVIEWER: I guess just about the same time we are talking about, President Truman's departure from the Presidency and the fact that he made the decision on the first atomic bomb, the first two atomic bombs, and he was quite reluctant to make another one again, that may have had something to do with it.

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, I'm sure it did. I'm sure it did, though again, I was not privy to any messages that would indicate what the President was thinking about at the time.

INTERVIEWER: Wasn't there a disagreement--I'm going back now to your, the Wonsan landing--wasn't there a disagreement as to who would command that, between the Navy and the Army, and wasn't it MacArthur's decision to put that in Army hands and wasn't this a bone of contention at that time, do you recall anything on that?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, there has always been a bone of contention between the Army and the Navy as to who commands an amphibious landing. It always comes up and, of course, we always straddle that problem by giving the Navy command while the troops are at sea, but the minute they hit the beach then the whole thing develops on the Army commander. And I remember something about this, but I'm not too sure who was arguing what at the time, but that wasn't one of our major problems. The major problem was the SUPPORT of that force over there, logistic support. It was a difficult situation insofar as the Navy was concerned because they didn't have much of a force to support that landing either. Fortunately, it was unopposed. There was no opposition to the landing at Wonsan, none whatsoever. They hit the beach and went right on north. The North Korean Army at the time was a shambles, but we let them get away by not closing across the peninsula. They had all moved north but we hadn't had much effect on them. We didn't capture near as many as we should have.

INTERVIEWER: General, you must have been besieged by visitors from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the State Department, from other agencies in Washington, when you were still in general headquarters. I know you mentioned earlier that General MacArthur kept himself isolated and usually only answered the messages from Washington that he chose to answer. How

did he treat all the visitors from Washington?

GEN HAMLETT: That is correct. Oh, he was charming with them. Charming with them. (Laughter) All of them that came and were taken into his office, I never saw any of them who came out of his office who weren't smiling and just TICKLED to death. The way General MacArthur had told them the whole story and they were usually convinced that he was right about everything when they walked out of his office. He was a charming man, when he wanted to be. Oh, my, he could charm the birds right out of the trees. I'll tell you a story later on about his visit to Washington when I let him, or rather when I had my aide take him over to meet President Kennedy because I had to go to a JCS meeting. Bus Wheeler, the Chief of Staff, was out of town and as Acting Chief of Staff, I had to be at the JCS meeting. And this is a great story and remind me to tell you about it when we get finished.

INTERVIEWER: Alright. Well, you stayed in the general headquarters in Japan up till December of '51 and then . . .

GEN HAMLETT: And then I was sent over to the 24th Division as the Division Artillery Commander. I had been angling for some sort of combat job in Korea ever since the thing started and finally succeeded after my old friend Babe Brian became the Division Commander of the 24th Division and asked for me as his artillery commander. At that time everything was static and all we did was sit on two sides of a mountain and snarl at each other. We had a lot of actions as far as patrols and limited advances and this sort of thing were concerned and we were able to do a lot of shooting with our artillery and digging of tremendous "hootches,"

I think you call them, in which to protect ourselves from incoming fire and that sort of thing. But it was a static war. There was no movement and it was very uninteresting. This was the time when the negotiations had started for armistice and, I don't remember exactly, the period insofar as they mesh into each other, but we weren't moving and the Chinese weren't moving.

INTERVIEWER: Just a lot of probing and . . .

GEN HAMLETT: A lot of probing and, on both sides, sometimes along the front, there would be a major engagement, but the 24th Division at the time never got into any type of major engagement. We had a very, very strong defensive position and it was almost impenetrable.

INTERVIEWER: This probably would be a good time to ask you about the development of the United Nations command idea. It occurred, of course, while you were in Japan and it involved what? . . . Australian soldiers, and there were Turkish soldiers there, probably some Greeks?

GEN HAMLETT: No, I don't remember any Greeks. I remember seeing Greek officers over there, but I don't think we had any Greek forces. We had Turkish soldiers, we had a Turkish brigade and they were very fine fighters, I might say. They had a good reputation. We had Canadians; we had British and Australians, and this comprised the Commonwealth Division, which was a very fine fighting unit. We had a battalion of French and they were mostly, I'm pretty sure the French Foreign Legion soldiers, and they were attached most of the time to the 2nd Division, I believe. The Turks were very colorful, very colorful, indeed! I remember visiting the Turkish headquarters over there once and through an

interpreter asking a brigade commander what we could do for him, and that was while I was still in GHQ. He said, "Send us more bread and get us more fighting." That's all he wanted more bread and more fighting. They were a great group insofar as fighters were concerned.

INTERVIEWER: This is the time of the great NATO spirit and the non-standardization of equipment and materiel of the NATO armies was a main subject then and it was one that you had to deal with. Everybody was bringing their own size rifle and everybody was bringing their own size artillery piece. How did you, did you have to handle that in the general headquarters in Japan?

GEN HAMLETT: We handled the feeding problem insofar as food and soft stuff was concerned, but when they brought in their equipment which was not similar to ours, well, it was up to them to furnish their own ammunition. However, we furnished them a lot of equipment after they got aboard, in the way of hardware.

INTERVIEWER: I imagine communications was a particular problem?

GEN HAMLETT: Communications was a problem, but, you know, communications can be solved very easily by just giving the other force some liaison radios and this is how that was ironed out; because, hell, a telephone system works on anybody's wires. No, the communications was not bad except where the language was different. Where the communications with the Turks was difficult, but otherwise, we didn't have many problems. We did have problems or providing them with the proper food, the things that they wanted. They didn't want GI rations; they wanted something else, and this bread incident was funny because we didn't issue a fifth of the

bread that these Turks wanted. I mean we are meat eaters; they are bread eaters. And they didn't want . . . you couldn't give them pork, of course, most of them being Muslims. But they wanted lamb, and lamb is hard to get though we did have a source from Australia and New Zealand. As a matter of fact, most of our meats we were shipping in from Australia and New Zealand. But the troops in Korea were well fed; they were well fed. We got the food in there for them. One interesting thing concerning the Korean War and little has been said about was the fact that a great number of the families left Japan during this period and went back to the States, particularly those whose husbands had gone into Korea with the troops, and various missions and so forth. My wife elected to stay and got a job with G-2 and she became an intelligence editor under General Willoughby on his staff and remained there until I returned-- and remained in Tokyo on the staff--until I returned to Japan with the 24th Division when the division was moved out of Korea, and joined me later then up in northern Honshu at the little post that I was commanding as a 24th Division garrison. I think it's interesting that some of the girls did stay out there and most of them that stayed did go to work, and it saved an awful lot of movement of people because we needed more people on the staff, of course, with the effort we had in the Korean War and these girls who went to work were invaluable. They had all kinds of jobs. They worked in the hospitals, nurses; they were stenographers and so forth. But they did provide a very good pool from which we were able to get good workers. We were living at the time out in Tokyo right in the middle of the city in a Japanese house. We had very

fine Japanese servants. As a matter of fact, one of these girls who was with us in the house, we still see her quite often. She lives out in Virginia. She married a master sergeant in the Engineer Corps, retired, and is working there in the mapping service, very fine girl. There are a lot of things that I could get into, family life and all that in Japan, but I don't think it's interesting historically. It was really a very good life. My daughter graduated from high school out there in the Tokyo High School, which had been there for years. It wasn't something that we set up. There had been an English speaking high school in Tokyo for a number of years. I forget who it was--one of the well known movie actresses who visited us in Berlin, I don't mean us personally--but she was there when I was commander and was talking to my daughter who at that time was married and had two children. And we found out that she and her sister had gone to this school, too. Olivia deHaviland, I believe it was. What was her sister's name? June Havoc, yes. Not that I'm too well acquainted with movie actresses, but this was an interesting episode. It was a very fine school.

INTERVIEWER: You met General Matthew Ridgway later on in your career when you were in Washington?

GEN HAMLETT: I had known General Ridgway. The first time I met General Ridgway was down in Panama when he was our commander, Army commander in Panama when we went on our class trip which the National War College did at that time. I don't know whether they still do it or not, but in the spring we divided up and went various places on trips. I went out with the crowd that went down to visit Ridgway's command. That was the first

place I ever met General Ridgway and strangely enough, this first meeting was one where we sort of clashed slightly. I mean, we had been given, or studied and talked over the questions that we would ask during the briefings that they were giving us, and one of them that I had in my little book was, "Why do you have so many people involved on your staff when you have so few troops?" And I had the numbers down because I had looked them up and was very familiar with it, and so I asked this question and General Ridgway himself got up to answer it because he felt that I was taking a poke at his command, which I was in a way. And he went to great lengths to explain to me why they needed all the people they did in his headquarters and I suppose they did. But it was a good question anyway, and that was the first time that I had ever met General Ridgway. But he remembered it years later; he remembered this incident and I'll talk about that some when we get into the period when I was serving under Ridgway. I saw him, yes, in Japan. I didn't in Japan; it was in Korea after he had taken over command of the Far East. He visited our division and I was there when he visited the division as the DivArty Commander of the 24th and Babe Brian who had been his (Ridgway's) Chief of Staff in Panama was commanding the division and we had a little conference in the field. I remember it was in back one of my battery positions. They were running me down and I was out visiting the troops at that time, and Ridgway asked me a number of questions about the artillery support and whatnot, and later on I again ran into him when he was Chief of Staff and I'll get into that later, too. He was a fine commander. I had a great deal of respect for General Ridgway, I always have had.

INTERVIEWER: In those, after winding up on your Korean tour there and before you shipped back to Japan as a division artillery, were you able to apply those new artillery techniques?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, they weren't new by this time, that was old hat. Everybody was doing it. I mean it was nothing new about it. We had massing of fires and very quick reaction for calls from fires from the infantry and in the position we were in, I could concentrate on any part of our front, at least two battalions in very quick time, very quick time. We had good support from Corps Artillery too at this time. It was quite an artillery setup we had in Korea.

INTERVIEWER: General, the Sabre jet aircraft was almost the new state of act during the Korean War, at least any type of jet aircraft, and I know it changed a lot of people's thinkings about the fire support coordination aspects. Did it ever give you any problems when you were a division artillery commander or in your . . . ?

GEN HAMLETT: No, we had right with us in my headquarters an air liaison man who had communications with his people right down with the regiments and we could bring in air strikes very quickly and put them on target in a hurry. There was certain difficulty in getting a number of aircraft that an infantry commander would want at a particular time, but we could usually . . . the Air Force through our communication system within the division, going on back then, could bring in air strikes in pretty short order. But I say, this was a defensive situation where it was a set piece, and there was no movement. And that makes it a great deal easier to get a response for both artillery and air support than you do in a moving situation as you well know.

INTERVIEWER: Well, you made, let's see, you made Brigadier General during that command, did you not?

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, I was still in the 24th Division but I wasn't promoted to Brigadier General until we had returned to Japan and had settled down in a more or less peacetime situation. The division did later move back to Korea, but I had gone back to the States before then. That was an interesting period, too. We were in northern Japan, the division headquarters was in Sendai and I was across the mountain near a little village called--a town rather--called Yamagata. It was the capital of the Prefecture of Yamagata. I got to know the governor, Governor Muriama, very well, and I will relate one incident that occurred which was revealing of the attitude of the Japanese at the time towards democracy, and the Emperor, and all the problems of their own social life that they had. I had a liaison, Japanese liaison fellow, with me who would come out almost daily to visit us and to talk with us, particularly if we had any problems. And we had a lot of problems that came up, mostly over the Japanese village that we were right in almost, where they had various and sundry entertainment facilities which sometimes our boys got in a little trouble and these type of things that we had to iron out. And this Japanese liaison officer on this particular occasion wanted to see me. He said the Governor wanted me to know that the Emperor and Empress were to visit Yamagata on a particular date. And this was the first time that the Emperor would have been out of Tokyo since the end of the war. And I asked this Japanese liaison officer why in the world would the Emperor and Empress come into this out-of-the-way place up in northern Honshu and

he said, "Because they have ancestors buried up here," which I didn't know anything about. Well, the question that arose, and the Governor wanted some answers to, was, "What could I do to keep too many American soldiers from showing up and ruining the show as it were?" And I said, "That will be very simple. I'll just put out an order that all men will remain inside our garrison during that period that the Emperor is visiting this part of your Prefecture." And that was fine. And then two or three days later, the liaison officer came back and he said, "The Governor wants to know if you and your staff can attend the little ceremony that we'll have when the Emperor arrives?" And I said, "Well, yes. We'll be glad to." He said, "He'd like to limit it though." I said, "That's all right. You tell me how many people you want me to have with me and that's the way we'll do it." And we agreed on, I think, I had five staff officers. Then the next question two days later was, "How did I propose to greet the Emperor?" And I told him, "Well, it was usual in our military service, when a dignitary of that type arrived in any place where we were in formation waiting for him, that we saluted and the soldiers if they were there, gave 'present arms'," and I explained that to him. And he thought that was fine. Two days later, I get another question, "How do you think WE as Japanese now that we are part of a democracy,"--and I must tell you this was after the peace treaty had been signed, so we are now a democracy, "How should we greet the Emperor? We haven't run into this before because you know how we used to treat the Emperor as a divinity and all that." And I said, "Yes, I understand that. I would suggest that when the Emperor arrives that you bow

graciously but not getting down on your knees and thumping your head on the floor, but just bowing as the Emperor and Empress come up and get off the train." Well, the day came and I was there with my staff and all of the dignitaries from the Governor on down in the Japanese setup, government setup there in the Prefecture there which corresponds to our state government, and the Emperor's train came in. And here stood the Emperor and the Empress in a picture window in the side of the train so that you could look right in and see the two of them standing. And they are very, very nice looking people and so were all the other Japanese there, and this was quite an occasion for them. And when the Emperor and the Empress stepped off the train, I was wondering what the Japanese were going to do; because in a quiet voice I said, "Hand salute." And my people all saluted and sure enough, the Japanese did exactly as I had recommended. They gave a nice gracious bow from the waist, but no one fell on their knees and hit the floor with their heads; so I feel in some way I might have had some impact on the cultural life of Japan at the time and later. That was very interesting, very interesting period. I enjoyed all of my service in Japan. It's really a wonderful country, everything is different. Nothing is the same. If you haven't lived there, and I guess you never will, but it is certainly, was the most educational and enjoyable part of our lives. My wife enjoyed it ever so much, too. And she got along well with the Japanese, and, well, we all did.

INTERVIEWER: What were your leadership challenges when you put the division artillery up in northern Japan?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, I think it was just the usual thing that you have

where troops have been in combat a long time. They get sloppy as hell, and they had gotten that way in my estimation and I don't say this as a slur on the former commander, it's just the fact that troops will do this and every now and then, you need to shake them up and that was my problem at the time, I had to shake them up. And I found some practices that were very wasteful of ammunition which I straightened out, too. But actually, there were no terrific problems of leadership whatsoever. It was just a matter of commanding, which I had done before so it wasn't anything new to me. Well, I think probably we've said about enough about Japan. I was promoted out there to Brigadier General, and I guess this is one of the HAPPY periods in your life, that first promotion to a star rank. I remember it more than I do any other promotion I ever had. I was at the house of a friend having lunch before a football game when a message came down from division headquarters by telephone telling me that I was on the list to be promoted. Well, my question was, "Am I promoted yet?" They said, "No, you are just on the list." So, I didn't put on my star that day. I think it was two or three days later.

INTERVIEWER: Today they have what they call the, jokingly, of course, the "charm school for generals," where they come into Washington and they get ten to twelve days of briefings on responsibilities and duties and probably privileges belonging to general rank. Did you get involved in anything like that when you were selected?

GEN HAMLETT: No, I didn't get any briefings on how to act. We didn't have any charm school about that.

INTERVIEWER: I think maybe the back channel communications system probably

developed later on after you made Brigadier General. And that was a big part of the briefing to find out what was going on in the Army and how to communicate around the world from one general officer to another?

GEN HAMLETT: Right.

INTERVIEWER: Well, of course, in those days a brigadier general was the authorized grade for a division artillery?

GEN HAMLETT: Correct.

INTERVIEWER: But you were going to be leaving there shortly and returning to Washington, and we have your next assignment here as the Assistant for Planning Coordination Office of Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans.

GEN HAMLETT: That was my assignment and this was certainly a new world for me because I had never served on the Department of the Army General Staff before. This was my first crack at the BIG staff, if you want to call it that. I was assistant to General Lemnitzer, and my specific job was . . . we developed in my little shop that I had the Army programs which involved the whole system of bringing say a weapons system into being and then funding it through the whole program. It had everything, all the programs as I remember it, 16 primary programs and all of the subprograms and whatnot. And we put these together there in my shop, and then I was also on the budget committee which was headed up by the budget officer of the Army in the Comptroller's office. He was also on my program committee and I was the chairman of the program committee, and he was chairman of the budget committee and the committees were the same, the same people. All you did was change chairman when you went from one committee to the other. And this was very closely dovetailed.

The programs with the money and all the staff sections, major staff sections, represented on these two committees. And I think we did a real good job though later we took a lot of guff from some of the people that Bob McNamara brought in, the brain trust, on how we were running the shop, but we got the job done, and I think we did it very well.

INTERVIEWER: This is 1952 to 1955, and I think Eisenhower is President then, and we were going through a deemphasis on the defense budget. A lot of historians say that President Eisenhower didn't want to be accused of favoring the military and in fact we probably lost ground. Your job was more difficult because of reduced amount of monies for Research and Development and Procurement?

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, it really was. I never quite understood General Eisenhower's attitude because apparently it was his attitude and it was his leadership that was cutting the Army back at this time. Again, it was one of those periods when the economy looked bad and they were trying to bolster it by taking money, just as they are today, out of the Defense budget, which you know we old military types think that is the wrong place to get your money when you want to save it. If you still want to present a strong posture vis-a-vis your enemies in the world, we've got plenty of them. That was one of the problems, yes; and then after the Korean War wound down and whatnot, again, we had that--let's cut out divisions and we were having a terrible time keeping the divisions that we felt were needed for national defense. The same thing is going on today. The same thing exactly. They always look at the budget and say, "You're paying people too much. Too much money going to personnel, the

best way to save money is to cut out personnel. Well, this is a good way to save it, but it's a good way. If you carry it too far, of course, to ruin your national defense posture, and I'm being a politician, I guess at this time, but that's what they were doing. They were weakening our defense attitude. I had a very fine three years there on this job, because it really gave me an insight into EVERY facet of the operation of not only the Army but the other services, from the "bird's eye view" you might call it of the Pentagon, and what goes and went on in the Pentagon. And when you talk about the Pentagon, or after that, I understood what people were talking about. And how your relationship between the Army, Air Force, and the Navy, and all these things, I was right in the middle of it all the time there during this period and working for Lemnitzer directly and for some reason the other deputies used me on a lot of things, too. I never did think that the job that was my primary responsibility was really very well understood by the Chief of Staff and the other Deputies.

INTERVIEWER: Who was Chief of Staff then, sir?

GEN HAMLETT: That's when I ran into Chief of Staff, who the hell was Chief of Staff? No, when I came in, it was General Collins, General Joe Collins. General Collins was an interesting person, a very interesting person. General Collins was the only man that I never could brief. He always briefed me. I could take a briefing in for General Collins and before I got 20 words out of my mouth, why he'd take over and brief me on the subject I was supposed to brief him on. And I will say he knew more about it perhaps than I did. He was a very knowledgeable person,

but dynamic, dynamic type. I liked General Collins. I liked him very much.

INTERVIEWER: General Lemnitzer was the, he was the DCSOPS.

GEN HAMLETT: He was the Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Operations AND Research and Development. That's when Research and Development was still part of DCSOPS and General Uncles, a major general at the time, was the Chief of Research and Development and that was one of our programs, of course. So, I was involved in Research and Development there, too. General Lemnitzer was a very easy man to work for except I never could get a paper back out of his office once I put it in there. It would get lost somewhere down in his "in" basket, and I used to have to go in and shuffle the papers and get mine out and put it in front of him and say, "Look, you got to sign this one; I've got a deadline." And when I'd explain it to him properly, he'd sign it and off we'd go.

INTERVIEWER: How did you happen to go to work in that office? Had Lemnitzer asked for you or was it just by luck or had you worked for that job or asked for it or . . . ?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, I don't know whether Lemnitzer asked for me or not. I had known Lemnitzer since he was a 2nd Lieutenant, not a 2nd Lieutenant. I guess the first time I knew Lemnitzer he was an instructor at West Point when I was a cadet. And I had known him then, and I'd known him other places. I had known him over at the War College. He was the Deputy over at the War College when I was a student. That was before I went out to the Far East command. He may have asked for me; I never asked him whether he asked for me or not. He did tell me he asked for me

later to come back and he was instrumental in my becoming Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations. I know that. That was when he was Chief of Staff, so I did know that. But, I don't know whether he asked for me or not the first time I went there. I'm sure there were times when he regretted it if he did. (Laughter)

INTERVIEWER: Well, as a relatively young Brigadier General, then, did you ever get involved in any meetings either with the Joint Chiefs of Staff or the National Security Council as to the posture of the Army in the post-Korean days?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, in this position of planning coordinator for the Army, I did have to be cognizant of the other plans in the other services, so I read a lot of the JCS papers, et cetera, but I was never part of the JCS operation. That was done by General Lemnitzer and the people down in G-3. This was not in my bailiwick to ever attend any JCS meetings. I don't remember ever going to a JCS meeting while I had that position. I did later though when General Ridgway became Chief of Staff of the Army replacing General Collins, . . . he used me on several occasions in the preparation of papers which would be generated down in G-3 and at briefings et cetera for the JCS. And once, and I'll never forget this, because it is indicative of the attitude that General Ridgway had and continued to have and also that those of us on the staff thoroughly believed in, particularly Jimmy (Gavin?), he was G-3 at the time. I'll get his name to you, and we can put his name in there, I'll think of it. But, anyhow this paper was one that went along with the briefing for the National Security Council concerning our ability to intervene in

Indochina and really take over the role of the French out there. This was quite a moot question and I took this briefing and the whole works from the G-3 crowd and went in with them. They were having a briefing with General Ridgway and when it was all over he said, "Well, I'm going to present that to the National Security Council, and, Hamlett, I want you to go with me and assist me with the slides and so forth." We didn't have any slides. Actually, we had boards with all the stuff on it. The essence of this briefing was that we are in no position; we don't have the wherewithal and it would be a great mistake militarily; and we didn't dwell on the political side of this problem to intervene in any way at this time in Indochina. We don't have the troops. Our whole posture is weak, and it WAS. That was when Eisenhower himself was cutting everything back. So, the day came for us to go to the National Security Council with this briefing and we went over to the White House and people were assembling; and we sat down outside the Oval Room where the big table that you see in the movies and still pictures, too, is. And the President, of course, came by and spoke to General Ridgway and nodded to me and went on in. He gave me a rather peculiar look as he went through the door and I turned to General Ridgway at this time and I said, "General Ridgway, I don't think I'm supposed to go in there. It's only you." He said, "Look, I want YOU in there." I said, "Yes, sir, but I think you better clear it." He said, "I'm not going to clear it with anybody." Well, the upshot of this was that I went with him. We followed the Vice President, Vice President Nixon. And I sat right behind Vice President Nixon at this meeting. Well, General Ridgway was,

as you know, an outspoken person, who believed very sincerely in things and didn't mind speaking his piece when he believed them. And he really threw the damper on any American intervention in Indochina, which I had a feeling at the time was not too popular with many of the people who were sitting at that table. As you know, this did, . . . this very meeting DID STOP any large-scale intervention at that time; though later under the Eisenhower regime, we did send some people into Indochina in an advisory capacity. The next day, strangely enough, I had a call from General Ridgway's office, and he said that he wanted me to know that he had gotten a direct call from the White House saying, "Don't ever bring somebody like Hamlett over here to attend a National Security meeting again." (Laughter) That always tickled me. I knew that I wasn't supposed to be there, but General Ridgway really didn't care. He gave a very fine briefing, too, I must say. And I was convinced just as General Ridgway was, and I remained convinced that intervention of the type that later developed within, that we developed in Indochina, was not the way to do that show. I don't like to discuss it too much because it can be said as hindsight on my part, but if you want to read my piece that I wrote in the National War College about the Far East and then some day if you can get into the archives and get the essence of that briefing which was prepared down in G-3, but certainly had my blessings and General Lemnitzer's blessings, before General Ridgway ever saw it, then you'll know that there were certain elements in the Army, certainly, who were opposed to intervention in Indochina. And I never changed my mind about it. Now, where do we go?

INTERVIEWER: Well, we are still in the '55 period and when you leave Washington this time, you go back over to Europe as a Corps Artillery Commander.

GEN HAMLETT: Well, let me tell you a little something about my leaving Washington because it was rather precipitous and I never doubted that, among other things, I was fired when I was sent out of Washington. And this is the way it occurred. You may not remember it but there was a tremendous amount of friction between the Secretary of Defense Charlie Wilson and General Ridgway. And Wilson was out to get Ridgway; there is no doubt about it, and we knew it down in the staff. And this is another place you were asking me about--did I ever go to conferences? Yes, I went up to the Secretary of Defense's office several times with General Ridgway when all the Secretaries were assembled and we had to present certain programs of the Army, the divisions that we needed and whatnot. And this was my job to provide the briefings for General Ridgway and to assist in these briefings. So, I was rather well known up on that floor of the Pentagon as being a henchman of General Ridgway's and I'm sure that some of the ire that was generated by Wilson against Ridgway rubbed off on me also, though I was just a minor character in this place. When it was obvious that Ridgway was going, was not going to be given a second tour as Chief of Staff of the Army, Paul Carraway, who was then the Army planner in G-3, and I collaborated on the development of a paper for General Ridgway to present to the Secretary of Defense when he left the Pentagon outlining the things that were going wrong insofar as the Army was concerned and how things could be

straightened out. And it was pointed directly at Wilson's throat, and the boys down in G-3 did a tremendous job on this paper. My only contribution was some editing and providing a go-between between the staff, the G-3 people, and General Ridgway. Now this paper was not cleared properly, really. Carraway and I were responsible for it, and I don't think though I'm not sure that I ever even read the paper or briefed General Lemnitzer on the paper in any detail whatsoever. I told him about it. I told him what we were doing and General Ridgway had ASKED for this, asked ME, and not Lemnitzer. On such and such a night, we'll say it's the 8th of the month, I went in with this paper and briefed General Ridgway on it and he read it word for word and gave me some changes to make in the paper. I went back to my office and made the changes and sent the paper back down to G-3, and the next morning we made a copy of it. We had lots of copies of the old paper, not lots of copies, I think there were six copies. What I'm talking about, this was a very hush-hush business. We weren't airing this in front of the whole staff because it was the Chief of Staff of the Army's "swan song" which was condemning the Secretary of Defense. Somewhere in the preparation, the last go-around on this paper, a copy of the original before we had made the last changes got into the hands of the office of the Secretary of Defense. Now, how it got there I never knew. And I was called at my house that night and told to go to the Pentagon and get all those papers together and classify them all top secret. Well, they weren't top secret at all. There wasn't anything about them. The highest thing you could put on them legitimately, really, was confidential.

I guess it was confidential information. But this really threw the Pentagon into an uproar, because somehow or other, the next day, the press, and by that time, I'd given General Ridgway the true copy, the one that had been corrected and whatnot, got hold of the old paper. We knew it was the old paper because some of the things that were involved had not been changed; the new paper the one that went up to the Secretary of Defense through official channels. But somebody leaked that, and I was immediately suspected; and was descended upon by F.B.I. people, defense people. I had to give an accounting of what exactly had occurred in all these papers. Ridgway went out as the Chief of Staff and right behind him went Hamlett, ordered hurriedly to Germany. So, I always felt that I was a casualty of the Pentagon at that time along with General Ridgway, though I must say the episode never did hurt me any. I was very happy to be going to Germany to get a command. I commanded the VII Corps Artillery where my old friend, who had been the comptroller of the Army was the Corps Commander, General Decker. General Decker later became Chief of Staff of the Army and it was under General Decker that I was promoted to Vice Chief of Staff. He became Chief of Staff of the Army and I was Vice Chief of Staff at that time.

INTERVIEWER: What were some of the reasons that Ridgway was not held on for another tour?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, Ridgway was adamantly opposed to the reduction in the Army that was going on. The tearing down of the whole Army system and he was--his contention was that he was taking a beating, the Army was, from the other two services and they were getting the money and we weren't.

And this was true. And this had to do with Wilson's philosophy about atomic bombs and this sort of thing. In other words, Ridgway's contention was that Wilson was raping the Army, and he was, and General Ridgway was quite vocal in our meeting upstairs about this. And they were at dagger points over the whole thing.

INTERVIEWER: General LeMay was the "big stick" for the Air Force at that time, and, of course, Secretary Wilson wanted strategic bombing capability.

GEN HAMLETT: Well, LeMay was commanding the Strategic Air Command.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, are you suggesting that maybe the Air Force's progress was certainly at the expense of the Army's decline?

GEN HAMLETT: That was our feeling. That was our feeling. I don't know whether you could document this historically or not but certainly we all felt this. It was a real dog fight going on in the Pentagon at that time, a REAL dog fight. It was dirty, it was dirty. That's why I was suspected of releasing this thing. And by the way, some weeks or months later this paper really was the background of the article that General Ridgway published or had published in the Saturday Evening Post which brought out all of these things. You might get a copy of that Saturday Evening Post at the time. It would be very interesting for you to read it, because most of the things that we had put in the paper were repeated in the Saturday Evening Post.

INTERVIEWER: Why were you suspect when you were, . . . when Ridgway knew that you were the one that was . . .

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, Ridgway wasn't suspecting me; he wasn't. It was the

defense people who thought . . . either Carraway; Carraway was under investigation, too. Both of us were. They even followed me to Germany. My last interrogation was after I had taken over command of the VII Corps Artillery. I don't know who leaked it, but we suspected that it came out of the Department of Defense because they had gotten a copy of the original before the last changes were made and that was the one that was leaked to the press from that copy. And Carraway always declared that none of his people had leaked it and none of mine had, though I might say we weren't above doing things like that. But we hadn't, we hadn't. My people hadn't; his may have.

INTERVIEWER: So, you weren't above doing things like that?

GEN HAMLETT: No! Not if we felt that it would help stave off the rape of the Army. As long as it wasn't something that was top secret or secret or really involved national security, and this didn't involve any secrets of national security. It was common knowledge. It was just put together in a way that said the Secretary of Defense was responsible for the rape of the Army. This is what we were saying and Wilson didn't like for this to be said in the paper. That was the crux of the situation.

INTERVIEWER: Well, you returned then to Germany in 1955 at a time when nuclear proliferation was now beginning. France was talking about nuclear weapons.

GEN HAMLETT: That's right. We were, we were even . . . we had available in the VII Corps Artillery an atomic weapon, that Big Gun, the 280MM, and we received the first atomic shell while I was commanding. And this was really something; this was really something, of course, to have an

atomic capability in a tactical force.

INTERVIEWER: Who did you relieve in that command? Do you recall? You say you thought you were fired but it looks like you were "fired up."

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, yes. As I say, it never hurt me any. It never did hurt me any because people . . . after all, we were . . . I was in the Army family. I was fighting for the Army, and anyone who was cognizant of what was going on, people like Lemnitzer, and other high ranking staff officers knew that the position taken by Ridgway was the right one, and that he had been really, . . . he was a man of great integrity; and boy, did he have the guts to stand up and talk. He could tell them; where a lot of . . . I've seen senior officers who didn't have the moral courage to jeopardize their careers when they knew they should say something, but they didn't. Ridgway would say it and I always gave him credit for having more moral courage than any officer that I--I don't say any--I say than MOST officers that I remember that I served under. He had it.

INTERVIEWER: This completes interview #4, reel #4.

SECTION 5

INTERVIEW WITH
GENERAL BARKSDALE HAMLETT

THIS RECORDING IS IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE U.S. ARMY MILITARY HISTORY RE-SEARCH COLLECTION, SENIOR OFFICER ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM. THE SENIOR OFFICER BEING INTERVIEWED IS GENERAL BARKSDALE HAMLETT. THE INTERVIEWERS ARE COLONEL JOHN J. RIDGWAY AND LIEUTENANT COLONEL PAUL B. WALTER, BOTH FROM THE U.S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE, CLASS OF 1976. TODAY'S DATE IS 11 MARCH 1976. WE ARE AT HILTON HEAD ISLAND. THIS IS INTERVIEW NUMBER FIVE, REEL NUMBER FIVE.

INTERVIEWER: Sir, we're back on the period of 1955 and your returning to Europe, this time to take over as Commanding General of 7th Corps Artillery in USAREUR. I'm sure you were glad to get out of Washington, but how did you find things in Europe?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, I was very happy as a matter of fact, to get out of Washington and get a command, particularly in an active area as we had in Europe at that time. I was in command of the 7th Corps Artillery. There weren't too many interesting things that occurred during that period, however I think it should be mentioned at that time we received our first atomic artillery in Europe, and one of the battery's 280 mm gun, was assigned to the 7th Corps Artillery which I commanded, and we did have a number of problems instant to how you secure atomic weapons and who has the authority to inspect them and many other things of that type. Of course our allies were tremendously interested in this type of weaponry, the Germans in particular, and we could tell them many, many things about it as far as operational matters were concerned, but we didn't go into the intricacies of how they were manufactured and that type of thing which I think they

were also intensely interested in, although they had no idea, I'm sure, of developing atomic weapons themselves at that time.

INTERVIEWER: How many weapons did you actually have?

GEN HAMLETT: As I remember, we had four guns, though there may have been more. You know, strangely enough, I'm talking now about four guns to the battery. We had in a battalion because we had all sorts of problems with respect to where we would deploy these guns for combat mission, and how many guns would be used behind this division and that corps and so forth. How would we supply this atomic weaponry support to our allies who didn't have any of these things, and the communications problem that developed from the deployment of these particular weapons was terrific. At that time we were issued, along with these atomic weapons, VHF type of relays for telephone installations and stuff that was brand new to us. None of us had ever handled it before. We had to bring in Signal Corps experts to handle this type of communications equipment. It was very intricate, but it worked. Of course it was all line of sight and our big antennas on top of the hills when we went out on maneuvers, were quite obvious, I'm sure to the enemy, but there just wasn't any way you could hide the things, and this itself was a terrific problem as far as a tactical situation was concerned. Naturally, we never fired any atomic weapons in Europe. We fired the guns but with an inert round.

INTERVIEWER: Do you recall how many weapons you actually had, the projectiles?

GEN HAMLETT: No, I really don't. We had considerable though, I would say in the neighborhood of 30 weapons at least. They had to be inspected and cared for and it took a lot of manpower to do this. The handling of that weaponry was very, very time consuming and man hour consuming.

INTERVIEWER: In 1955 there was considerable pressure to work out some agreements between the Americans and NATO members and even as early as '55 France was saying, "We'll get our own if you won't help us," and there was certainly no doubt that Russia was well on the way of having it. We haven't improved much, frankly, from reducing the manpower requirements in the nuclear capable units. Many have said that it is at the expense of other normal training. Did you sacrifice routine readiness of the units that had the weapons?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, I would say the units that had the weapons, yes, had to sacrifice because we were short of manpower to begin with and caring for these weapons took up so much of our time, that, yes, I would have to admit that insofar as the units that had the weapons, however, the personnel in those units were highly selective. They were selected people and did a better job in the hours that were available than the run-of-the-mill type of enlisted man, and recruit and officer would do. Had splendid personnel in this battalion. I was always amazed at how quickly they could deploy these tremendous weights that they had involved in these big guns. You know, sometimes it would take them an hour of pulling and shoving and hauling

and backing and fill-in to get to one underpass at a railroad crossing, and we had to select roads which took them over bridges that would hold these weapons, weighed over 50 tons as you remember. They were long, very hard to manage. Tipped over very easily. This was one of the big problems with that equipment, but I was amazed and certainly very happy about the winter maneuvers of the fall in late '55 or early in '56. I can't remember when it was, but we took those weapons over some mountain roads that I just wouldn't believe that they could negotiate with snow and ice on these roads, and this battalion did a tremendous job. I would say they were ready, yes. Their readiness was excellent, but time was sacrificed to looking after the weapon.

INTERVIEWER: Of course you also had the 8 inch weapons that had a nuclear delivery capability at that time, too.

GEN HAMLETT: No, that came a little later. Yes, that came a little later. As I remember, the nuclear weapons for the 8 inch came while I was commanding the 10th Division. The corps artillery received these weapons, but not while I was commanding the corps artillery.

INTERVIEWER: In 1955 General, the German-American relations program was really building up steam. I was one of the young officers arriving in Germany in 1956, so I probably got there after the initial drive began. Can you remember the instructions and the guidance that were developed affecting German-American relations and if so, what your reaction was to it?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, I can't remember sentence by sentence or word by word what the instructions were, but the general gist of the instructions is, "Let's try to get along better with these German people than we have. They are now our allies. They're no longer our enemy and we must foster this friendship in every way that we can," and this is what all of us did as commanders, and as persons, too. I know, as I've said before in here, intensely interested in hunting and fishing and in game management and this sort of thing and I quickly made friends with the German, you might call the "shooting society" in the Stuttgart area. There were a lot of very ardent sportsmen there and some of the friends that I go back to see to this day were people that I met in 1955 in Stuttgart. One man has become a very close friend of mine. The two families are very close and we visited them in Germany and they have visited us here in the States. Mr. Monfreid Baer who lives in Stuttgart. He's one of the big automobile moguls there. He makes all the heating, cooling, or his factories do, heating, cooling and so forth, equipment for half the car manufacturers in Europe, not just in Germany. He also has a factory in France.

INTERVIEWER: So you had an effective program going in the corps?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, quite effective. And also in the Corps Headquarters there in Stuttgart and the Army Headquarters. We had an exchange of social activities with the Germans. They had a German-American Club which was attended regularly by most of us. The ladies would get together with the German ladies and my wife started studying German the third day we were in

Stuttgart and within a year's time, she's a linguist anyway, the Germans themselves would ask her what part of Germany she'd been reared in because they couldn't recognize her particular accent which was a Spanish accent, with German. Not the usual American accent.

INTERVIEWER: Who were some of your commanders in the corps, General?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, General Decker was the Corps Commander the entire time I was with the 7th Corps. General Decker later, as you know, became Chief of Staff of the Army. And a very, very fine man, a very fine commander he was.

INTERVIEWER: How about some of your officers? I remember when you were in Berlin, you had, I guess it was Colonel Weyand at the time?

GEN HAMLETT: Colonel Weyand, yes, was assigned to the Berlin Command and commanded the infantry regiment there in Berlin while I was the Commander in Berlin, or during the time I was there, he came in. One of the stories that I told you all, I think, but didn't put on tape was the fact that I talked General Hodes into sending General Weyand up there because he was such a golf player, a good golf player, and I needed a partner to keep from losing so much money. But General Weyand became so interested in developing his infantry regiment that his golf suffered terribly and I had no better partner than I'd had before. Some of the officers that I had there in the 7th Corps Artillery, you would recall their names. My executive officer was a classmate of mine, Sandy Stone, and a very fine executive he was, too.

He was and is the Secretary of my West Point class. I can't remember any of the officers that I had under me at that time ever developing and going on to higher command, but there were crackerjack bunch of people and did a fine job.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember the Soviet liasion teams that used to roam Western Germany in those days?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, yes, and we were very much interested in that, of course much more interested after we received the atomic weapons, and from time to time we would get reports that a Soviet liasion team was parked near our gun part with the 280 guns and we would put somebody on them, surveilling them of course. Then we reported to higher command. It was sort of a cat and mouse game that we played with them. I don't think they ever learned anything or penetrated our security of the atomic weapons, but they were always around, particularly on maneuvers you'd see them, and it was a standing order, of course, to report immediately and I forget the code word we used. But it was all done, as I say, sort of a cat and mouse game. And later when I commanded in Berlin we did the same thing there with our liasion team in East Germany and lots of my problems, as commander in Berlin were a result of clashes between our liasion people and Russia and East German military people.

INTERVIEWER: I can remember on two or three occasions when I was a member of 5th Corps, which was a neighbor down to your south, that we had the Soviets

at social events in Frankfurt. Did you ever meet any of them at any corps social events?

GEN HAMLETT: No, no, not while I was commanding in Germany was I ever involved in any social events. Of course, when I was commanding in Berlin I saw the Russians almost on a daily basis and we exchanged courtesies, social courtesies, they came to our parties over on our side of Berlin and we went over to some of theirs. I talked about some of those things when I made that tape at the War College last month.

INTERVIEWER: The period of 1955 was probably an excellent period where there were no restrictions on fuel, and training dollars seemed to be plentiful. Did you spend a lot of time at Frafenwohr or Hoenfels?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, yes. Yes, indeed. We did. We spent a great deal of time at both of these . . . we didn't use Hoenfel. We used Grafenwohr which, by the way, was a very good training area and was large enough to permit us to use all of our weapons. So, though of course the long range weapons we had to shorten up a bit. But we could get excellent training, and our firing, service practice, and whatnot was very good there. We had plenty of ammunition and stayed in the field a great deal of the time. As a matter of fact, the wives, particularly of our younger officers, griped somewhat about the number of days during the year that their spouses were away from home, but this was part of the training program that we had, which was a very good one there in the Corps.

INTERVIEWER: Who dictated your program? Was that left pretty much to you?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, the nuts and bolts of the program, the artillery training, was left to me, but the objectives came from the Army to the Corps down to the various units, and the times for readiness inspections and this sort of thing were all laid out from higher commands. But it was a progressive thing. During the year you would start with your small unit training and progressed right on through until the maneuvers that we had, usually the winter maneuver. We did do most of our, and still do in Germany, maneuvering in the winter period when we wouldn't be interfering with the German farmers in developing their crops and so forth. After their crops had been taken in, and we liked to maneuver in the winter if it was real cold because with the frozen ground, we could get around a lot better than we could during periods of thaw or rain and so forth. Though, I must say, I saw more mud in our maneuvers in Germany than I had seen in the Korean War.

INTERVIEWER: You had IG's and CMMI's in those days? What were your feelings on those? There seems to be two chains of thought. One, that they really are a damn nuisance and pain and they take a lot of time and really don't say anything other than, you can get ready for one, either one. What was your feeling generally on those types of inspections?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, I, of course, had been initiated in the inspection process as a 2nd lieutenant back in the so-called, "Old Army," and my

feeling was that any inspection carried on by people knowledgeable of what they were doing was always of help to a unit because it pointed out your weaknesses. Where you as a unit commander or member of the unit were too involved in the woods to see out of the trees, you might say, and I never had any objections to inspections. I used to think that some of the tests that were given, and I might say that I was involved in writing a lot of tests for artillery during World War II, were too long and involved and didn't give the unit commander enough leeway and actually showing what his unit could really do rather than going through a set piece that they practiced time after time after time. In other words, there were too much of a set piece in my estimation, the tests that we had. I tried to get something started when I was the operations officer of the Army to make those tests more flexible so that the unit commander would have really more responsibility in outlining what his unit would do. During a test and carrying it out than just following a set piece. Now I think the tests today probably reflect more flexibility than they did at the time we are talking about. Does that answer your question?

INTERVIEWER: Yes, sir. You were obviously an excellent commander or you wouldn't have had all the commands that you did have, and I'm sure that you had certain demands that you placed on your subordinate commanders. Would you reflect on some of those and discuss with us what you expected of your commanders and what were the type of things that you would consider relief for or did relief ever enter your mind or just how did you work that?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, while we're on relief, let me give you my philosophy on relief of officers. I have always felt that a good commander could take what he had available and make a good command out of it if he himself would work at it. I've always felt that many commanders who relieved a lot of people did this really to cover up their own shortcomings and I saw that a number of times in my career in the Army. So I was always, with this philosophy, I was always very reluctant to relieve a man. As a matter of fact, I can only think of two or three situations in my entire career where I had to call an officer in and say, "Look, I've done everything I can to straighten you out and get you on the right path and you just don't seem to understand what I'm trying to do, so I'm asking to have you sent to another unit." Now, I did that three times quickly, as I think right now, and these officers were all commanders, full colonels, and lieutenant colonels, two lieutenant colonels and one full colonel. And the colonel that I had to relieve, it really hurt me because he was a brilliant fellow, but he could not command. He did not have that little something that it takes to command people. He's one of the outstanding staff officers in the Army and remained so until he retired as a colonel. The two lieutenant colonels that I am talking about were just, in my estimation, stupid. And after putting up with their stupidity time after time, I finally had to call them in and tell them that they were relieved, and was a very traumatic experience for them and for me. So my philosophy during my periods of command was, "Hamlett,

you're not going to get any better, so you might as well take these people and teach them and if you don't know how to teach them then you ought not to be commanding this unit." So that's my philosophy in a nutshell about command. Now, what are the things that I demanded. Well, I demanded that people be on the job. That was one thing. I demanded that they spend as much time in the field with their troops and looking after their troops, checking their troops and inspecting their troops as I did. And this paid off. I think one of the smartest statements that Bruce Clark, who was a great expert on training, ever made to me was, "That if you don't check your orders after you give them, they won't be followed," and this is so true. You just can't sit back at your desk and give orders to the lower echelons and expect them to be executed unless you go out there and check to see that they are executed. And you know, I found my browsing about since I've been retired, that this is just as true in industry and business as it is in the military. And it always amazes me that so many people running businesses and big industries and whatnot, expect orders to be carried out and when they write them out and hand them to a subordinate. You can not sit in your office and run something. It just won't manage itself, and that's what management is all about.

INTERVIEWER: When I arrived in Germany every orderly room had a sign of General Bruce Clark's remarks, that, "The unit does well those things the boss checks."

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: That was all over Seventh Army when I arrived there in 1957.

GEN HAMLETT: Well, that was what I was referring to.

INTERVIEWER: You have a very interesting philosophy, General, and this would be a good time to drop back and you commented yesterday that your promotion, your selection for promotion to brigadier general was an extremely happy day. Would you share with us what your own private thoughts were, first on what your goals were, did you want to be a general officer and if so, what did you aspire to be, and what were your thoughts, first getting selected for brigadier and then what you thought you'd have to be to get selected for major general and did you re-evaluate your goals as you proceeded on into the 1950's and into the 1960's?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, yes. I think anyone involved in the military or in business should do just the things you're talking about. Let me go back to my lieutenant days after graduation from West Point. If we studied the projections of promotion, my best rank that I could hope for, if things continued in the same way they were going when I got out of West Point in 1930, the best I could hope for was to be, someday, before I was 65 years old, promoted to lieutenant colonel. Now, this is all I could look forward to. Well, that sort of thing certainly doesn't make a man too enthusiastic about continuing in the service, BUT at that time there wasn't any place else to go. This was during the great depression, and there weren't any jobs and we were very happy, all of us who had gotten out into the service at that time, to have money coming in every month because we were few and far between. College graduates were a nickel a dozen at

that time. I had an orderly as a 2nd lieutenant who had a master's degree from Missouri University, and the boy was a fine person. He just couldn't get a job anywhere and to keep from starving to death, he enlisted in the Army and his pay was \$21.00 a month, and the ration at that time was .23 cents a day. That's the food ration. And we fed well on .23 cents a day. But then when Hitler started stirring up Europe and we could see the writing on the wall that things were going to really start humping all of us, re-evaluated what we were doing, and I, for one, made a firm decision that my life WAS the Army. Period. I had no intentions of EVER getting out of the Army. And I would say, what were my goals? Looking back, I don't think I had any specific goals insofar as how far I wanted to be promoted. I just wanted to be the best field artillery officer they had in the Army. That was my ambition. And I worked at it. And although I had been a mediocre student at West Point and graduated almost in the middle of my class, I think my class graduated 244 people and I ranked 123, so you can see I was right in the middle of the class, but not so at service schools. I ranked among the first 5% in every service school where they had grading systems and let you know whether you had done well or not. So I was no longer a mediocre student insofar as my profession was concerned. I became an outstanding student by working at it, and I was ambitious, yes. I wanted to be the best field artillery officer in the Army. I don't think I ever attained this, but I was up there in the first 5% at least.

Now, about re-assessing my goals. Well, naturally after each promotion, I don't care who you are, I don't think it is something that is involved in just a few people, I think after every one of us gets a promotion, then we look to the next one and start working for it and I've seen the system in the Army and I've seen so many, many very fine officers retire without being promoted from colonel to general or from brigadier general to major general who went out of the service terribly disappointed, disgruntled, unhappy. I always felt sorry for these people because most of them, as you talk with them, and you've talked with them, just don't understand why they weren't promoted, too, along with people that they thought they were superior to, and maybe they were because no promotion system is infalliable. But I must say that in the periods when I was in the Pentagon as a senior officer reviewing promotion boards, recommendations and so forth, I never was able to fault the promotion board. I thought all of them did their work as well as they could based on the information that was available to them. We have never had, really, well, we've had good systems of efficiency reporting, but we've never had what I would call an infalliable system of making recommendations about officers. Because there's too much personality in all of these things. There's too much of personal feeling and I think it goes, not to personal feeling to degrade an officer, but the personal feeling that gets us in more trouble, is the personal feeling that raises his efficiency reporting when he really doesn't deserve it. And this involves

a lot of things. Pride in your own organization. If you're making out efficiency reports you don't want to admit that this battalion commander in your mind was just a little above satisfactory. Oh, no. That would degrade your own unit. So you lift him up to superior, and this goes on and I'm sure now it always has. And too many efficiency reports are based on feeling rather than definite knowledge of an officer's capability. Now, I could talk about this for hours and hours and I could never tell you or anyone else how to make it any better. I've tried for years to do it myself and I have never come up with a better solution in my own mind than we have. And I saw officers that should have been promoted, not get promoted. I saw officers that should not have been promoted, get promoted, but not too many. Now, that's one thing I will say. There are more people who don't get promoted who should, and I'm talking now about at the general officer rank, than there are people who shouldn't have gotten promoted who did, if you follow me. And I think that's one thing that our system does better than anything else. It does eliminate, it does eliminate the people who should not be promoted beyond their capability. So we find that there are officers who are promoted beyond their capabilities in every rank.

INTERVIEWER: General, the pattern of your assignment shows, almost shows, a command assignment occurring before each promotion. In your day, was command the key essential ingredient, for promotion? Successful command?

GEN HAMLETT: Command was essential insofar as my own philosophy was concerned, and I got this when I was a youngster, from General McNair when I was his aide back in Fort Sam Houston, Texas. I had occasion to talk with General McNair about my aspirations from time to time and ask his advice. And I can never forget, and never did I forget, during my service, when he pointed a finger at me one day and said, "Ham, always seek command. Always seek command. Don't ever seek a staff position. Seek command." And I always did. I never let an occasion go by if I had an opportunity to say something about where I should be assigned without saying, "Look, I want a command. I want it my next assignment," and this was my philosophy and I got it from the "old man." I think it's a sound one, and it worked out very well. I think I had a most fortunate and lucky career because I did get commands and I was put in the places where I would be seen and if I had any ability it would be acknowledged.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned being seen. How much do you think visibility counts for selection to the senior grade?

GEN HAMLETT: I think it counts a great deal beyond the grade of major general. I think a major general who doesn't attain visibility doesn't have a great chance of becoming a lieutenant general and then four stars. Up until that point, I don't think that visibility is too important.

INTERVIEWER: You also mentioned . . . by the way, we have the same inflated efficiency report syndrome that you mentioned when you were a young officer

and the reluctance of people to tell it like it is, but because of this inflated report, a lot of officers, usually above the rank of lieutenant colonel, would soon adapt a feeling that it's not so much what you know, but WHO you know on a selection board. Was that type charge prevalent when you were preceding up to the rank of colonel?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, yes. I've heard that all my life and you have, too. We'll keep on hearing it. But in my review of proceedings of selection boards, and I was involved in this quite a bit during my periods in the Pentagon, I never saw this. I never saw this really be the criteria for promotion. If a name came up in a selection board that none of the board knew or recognized or knew anything about, there were ways of finding out more about this person, and when you go over the record of an officer for 20 years of service, you get an up and down in those efficiency reports that gives you a pretty level curve to base your recommendations on. So even though these efficiency reports are not as sound as any of us would like for them to be, over a period of years you do get a real good reading on an officers capability because you have different types of people with different mentalities and different objectives themselves making reports on these people and it shows up. So, I think our system of selection by boards that we have is a sound approach to this whole thing. And it does dwindle out a lot of the inflated reports and some of the derogatory reports to a great extent. I don't say its infalliable, but I have great confidence in the work that's done by our promotion boards.

INTERVIEWER: So when you were the 7th Corps Artillery commander, you were a brigadier general, you hoped to be a major general. What were your personal thoughts on what you had to achieve to be selected for the next promotion?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, it gets back to the thing I said before. I had to be the best artillery commander in the Army, and that's what I tried to be.

INTERVIEWER: And obviously you were.

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, no. I wouldn't say that I was, but . . .

INTERVIEWER: Well, now General Hamlett, the commands are also done by selection boards, selection for command. In other words, the way the present commanders are selected is that a board meets annually and people are selected for command by selection boards. This kind of narrows the senior commanders prerogative down as to who he wants and who he gets. What do you think about this type of selection process?

GEN HAMLETT: If done properly and if it's based on enough information, what do they use efficiency reports for? Solely efficiency reports? Do they also get recommendations from senior commanders who've had these people under them? I think you have to have a great deal of information to make a real good judgement in this type of board to select people for command, and I do feel that in many instances where an officer has just been outstanding as a staff officer, he'll be taken to another staff to continue his fine work as a staff officer and if this board that I'm talking about turns this man

down because he's spent all of his life in staff, then there's something wrong because he should be given a chance, for people to find out if he can command something. And just because you're the greatest thing since the wheel as a staff officer doesn't indicate to me that you can also be a fine commander. Some can, some can't. So, insofar as command is concerned, I think that every officer or a regular Army officer should have a chance during his career to try his hand at command, and be rated as a commander. And if their selected out all of the time, they never get the chance to do this. I can't quarrel with what is going on because I don't know enough about it. You tell me this is true. I say, "Yes, well, if they have enough information and the board is flexible enough, I see no reason why they couldn't select a commander." Because somebody's got to select them but I do think it's a shame if an officer goes through his entire career and never has a command because nobody will ever know whether he can command or not.

INTERVIEWER: If you had a choice between a regular officer and a reserve officer and only one command assignment, I would assume that you would give preference to the Regular Army officer?

GEN HAMLETT: Not necessarily. I had, just to give you an example, I had this arise when I was commanding the 16th Division Artillery in combat and it was up to me to select an S-3, and I was the division artillery commander. And I had two men, one a Regular Army officer, graduate of West Point, the

other a reserve officer, a graduate of Purdue. They were the same age and about the same ability, but the Purdue officer was faster mentally, and I knew this and I selected him. Well, I'd say I would select a man that I think would do the job the best. I don't care whether he's a reserve officer or a regular officer.

INTERVIEWER: All right, sir. How were the days, let's see . . . you were promoted to major general the 17th of May?

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, I was still commanding the 7th Corps Artillery when I was promoted and I knew they promoted me out of a job, and I was sitting around wondering where Hamlett would be sent next when I received orders to report to the 10th Division and take command of the Division with headquarters in Wurtzburg, Germany, and naturally I was elated over being selected to command a division.

INTERVIEWER: You had been a successful artillery commander in all your command assignments, and now you're commanding the infantry division, "The Mountaineer Division."

GEN HAMLETT: Well, it was not a mountain division at that time. It was a pure infantry division. It had been the 10th Mountain Division during World War II when it was assigned to the Fifth Army in Italy. The 10th Division that I took command of was a straight-line infantry division organized as a triangular division, and a very fine division. There were some problems that you always find when you take over a command, and I

was told about some of these problems and one of them involved this colonel that I was talking about a few minutes ago, and that was the softest spot in the division because his regiment had failed their test and were in pretty bad shape. And after trying to get this straightened out, I realized it was impossible to do it, and I didn't have much time. I had been given a time table to get that division ready for maneuvers and after being out with this group, commanders, and having been on a small maneuver which involved only the division, I realized that this very fine officer would not be able to straighten this regiment out, so I had to call him in and tell him I'd gotten a new commander, which I did. And the new commander shaped the regiment up very quickly because basically it was a fine, fine regiment. Personnel and all were good. They were just confused as to what they were doing because the confusion came from the regimental headquarters. And I had no more problems except the problem that I'd told you about, I think one night, when we were talking about the terrible rape case that came up soon after I'd taken command of the division. But I was able to straighten this out since I had written a letter through channels concerning some of the personnel who had been assigned to the division prior to the division being rotated from the United States. It was one of the divisions that had been rotated from the United States completely, and taken the place of another division which had been sent back to the States. And some of the people that had been put in this division just to fill out, just bodies to fill out the

division to 100%, were I think at that time, as I remember, we shipped the division at 105% to take care of attrition during the first 6 months after it had been deployed overseas. But these people were taken out of Leavenworth. I'm talking about the prison at Leavenworth, not the school. Out of detention barracks and all this sort of thing. I had a group of these very, very poor types and every one of these men involved in this rape case were people whose names I had mentioned in my letter to the Secretary of the Army, through channels, pointing out what had occurred, and when the investigation was carried out because of the terrible publicity that developed from this in Germany, because of this, and it was a bad case, a real bad one, and the Secretary of the Army himself came over to investigate when I laid all my cards out on the table, it was quite obvious that the fault was not that of any command in Germany. It was the fault of the personnel assignment system in the States. Secretary Brucker went back to the States and straightened this out overnight. New criteria for assignment of soldiers or for retention of soldiers, and for enlistment of soldiers were developed almost within days after he returned from this trip, and it really was very helpful for the Army as a whole. Brucker was a real red, white and blue Army man. I can tell you that. He believed in the soldier and the Army and he was just Army all the way through.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned the rape case. Of course you have logistic experience. You had a lot of operational experience and an awful lot of

commanding experience, but here you were a major general and you're now given general court martial authority with the authority to award bad conduct and dishonorable discharge. Would you tell us whether or not you felt that you were adequately prepared through your military training period to accept that responsibility and how much reliance did you have in your Judge Advocate General section when you first took over?

GEN HAMLETT: I had a very good judge advocate. I wish I could remember his name. I can't. And naturally a division commander with this responsibility can call on the judge advocate at higher echelons to assist him when he has something really rough to handle and actually I did have. In this case, I had conferences several times with the Judge Advocate General of the Army. The reason being that this girl who'd been raped would break down every time she was brought in as a witness, and we finally had to take a deposition from this girl which caused me to vacate the death penalty, which I was seeking as the convening authority. And as I say, I didn't know how to go about this really, and this intricate business about the death penalty that couldn't be administered if you couldn't have the key witness appear in court and I did have the Army Judge Advocate come down and we all discussed this. I did advocate insofar as the death penalty was concerned. But no, to the question you asked me, yes, I thought my experience gave me enough background to handle this type of thing with the assistance that I could get from the legal side of the staff.

INTERVIEWER: Who were your regimental commanders?

GEN HAMLETT: I had a regimental commander named Tetters, Bernie Tetters. God, I'd have to go and get my book out and there were several different assignments that came up while I was the Division Commander and I just frankly don't remember the names of these people. I remember Tetters because later when I was at Norwich University, I brought Tetters in there as my developments officer after he retired as a full colonel. He was a very fine officer and one of those that I'll always wonder why he didn't become a brigadier general. He was a great little commander, a very fine officer. I'd had two other regimental commanders at the same time. One of them did become a brigadier general. Was retired as a brigadier general, Houston, Mel Houston. You may have run into him. His nickname down in his regiment was "The King Cobra". He was a man of slight stature but big voice, and ran a very fine regiment. As a matter of fact, it was in his regiment that this rape occurred. This business was in Bamberg where his regiment was garrisoned. See, I had five different garrisons in the division and with my headquarters in Wurtzberg, and this took a lot of traveling, I can tell you, carrying out General Clark's command, that the commander follow-up of every order that he gave because I spent more time going around in helicopters than I did at home.

INTERVIEWER: General, would you like to describe some of your commander's conferences with General Bruce Clark?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, there is no particular description . . . I don't know why you should describe them, I mean, when we had command conferences with Bruce, why, he always told you exactly what to do down to the finest detail and then you went back home and tried to figure out how you could do the major things that he wanted done without becoming too involved. Bruce was a good commander, but in my opinion tried to command all of the units of the Army rather than commanding the Corps and it really disturbed the Corps Commanders to no end that we as division commanders received direct orders on things that should have been going through corps, and one of my corps commanders, he's deceased now, Mathinson, Matty Mathinson we called him, came to my headquarters one day and told me that he was going to the Army commander or rather the USAREUR commander, and make an issue of this whole thing. Bring it all out into the open and charge Bruce Clark with ruining his command and all this. And I finally convinced him, he was a good friend of mine, we'd been instructors at Fort Sill together, and though he was senior to me by a number of years, we were friends and I finally told him, I said, "Matty, this is the worst thing in the world you can do to straighten out anything of this sort. You're not going to help things you're going to make them a lot worse and in the long run you're going to be the fellow that suffers if you do such a thing." And after all, every time I received something from General Clark, I'd turn it over to you. You know every order that I get and so do your other division commanders because I've discussed this with them. And so I wouldn't give him a

backup. And he didn't. He took my advice and we never had a "Donneybrook," but don't get me wrong, and I wouldn't want the records to show that I didn't have great admiration for Bruce Clark, because I did. He was a very, very intelligent, very smart, very fine commander. He had one way of commanding and that's one thing I used to admire in General Ridgway. He always made the statement, "Do something in your manner, in your command manner." And everyone, particularly in high command, I think has a different manner. I know during World War II on a couple of occasions, I came in contact with Field Marshal Montgomery's headquarters. One time I was at a conference of Montgomery's and this man would have driven me around the bend the way he commanded his troops. He was so detailed and so involved in every little issue, and to me it would have been counter effective if I had tried to command in the same way, yet, this man was a great commander. The point I make here is that I think all commanders have certain personal traits that show up in their command procedures and some of them are good and some of them are bad. But if you've got more good ones than bad ones, then you turn out to be a good commander. So, there we are. Bruce Clark was a fine, fine officer.

INTERVIEWER: Could we take it from that that you were more of a mission type commander? In other words, you gave broad guidance to your subordinate commanders rather than the detail . . .

GEN HAMLETT: I think I did. And I'll go back to an experience that I

had. I don't know whether I brought it up in discussions with you people or not. When I was commanding the 16th Armored Division Artillery during World War II, before we had our division tests, this was in the States and I'd taken over this command and had asked for the command. I'd gotten on the phone and asked the division commander to let me come out there and command his artillery because he'd lost his artillery commander. And I was having a terrible time, and things weren't shaping up. And this young S-3 that I just spoke about, Laddie Stahl, Purdue graduate that I had made my S-3, came to me and we were sitting talking and I said, "I don't know why this thing isn't developing better. I'm having so much trouble." And Laddie looked at me and said, "Colonel, I'm going to tell you what the trouble is. You're trying to command all the batteries in the division artillery, and you can't do it. Why don't you have the battalion commander command the batteries, and you command the division artillery?" Now that young squirt had guts enough to tell me that and I must say I was smart enough to listen to him. And I never forgot that lesson. And I've told Laddie this time and time again. In later years, by the way, he's been head research man with General Electric and is Division Commander in the Reserve right now, and has been for the last 10 years. He was selected as a brigadier general in the reserves a long, long time ago.

INTERVIEWER: You stayed the commanding general of the 10th Division for a year, 1956 to 1957?

GEN HAMLET: Yes, another very interesting incident while I commanded the 10th Division was the Hungarian incident. We were on winter maneuvers. I'm not sure it was winter maneuvers. I can't remember exactly the date that the Hungarian . . . but the whole U. S. Army, Europe, was in the field deployed in battle positions. Now, it seemed to be a coincidence to us that we would be in the field deployed in battle positions when that Hungarian thing crested, but there we were. And the things that went on apparently back at our home stations where the girls were all alone with just a few guards around the place. They were all frightened to death because it looked like we were in the field for the specific purpose of moving into Hungary and I must admit it sort of appeared that way to me, too.

INTERVIEWER: You arrived on the winter maneuvers. It was the 23rd of October 1956 when the Hungarian revolt occurred.

GEN HAMLETT: Yeah. Oh, we were in the field deployed and there was a great deal of discussion about just why we happened to be there at that time, and I know I for one was hopeful that we get the order to move into Hungary, but we didn't. Maybe I've said something about this before. I think we could have.

INTERVIEWER: Your division was ready to go.

GEN HAMLETT: You did. You asked me the question. Would the allies have supported us? My answer is to that, I don't think they would have. But

I know nothing about what went on politically at higher headquarters and in Washington's thinking. I had no idea what the thinking was. I wouldn't want to comment on it, but we were ready.

INTERVIEWER: Let's talk about then the NATO members that you actually saw in Germany, in your opinion, then in 1956, do you think the Federal Republic of Germany was a strong and capable member of NATO? And would have supported, say, an invasion into Hungary?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, I think the military insofar as the German military were concerned, they would have been willing to take a chance on it, but I don't think, I don't know. I say I don't think. I shouldn't make a statement because I really don't know what the political feeling was in Bonn at that time. I just don't know. Certainly the German Army was not combat ready as such. They had an Army of sorts developing, but they had a long way to go at that time. They had a long way to go. They had very little equipment and had had very little, really, very little training. So I would say their best role in an adventure of this sort would have been in the rear area commands to take care of assisting, and logistics and so forth. But I'm sure there were a lot of good combat soldiers too, that we could have used.

INTERVIEWER: What was your opinion of the French forces that you saw in Germany? They were still stationed in Germany in that year.

GEN HAMLETT: I didn't see much of them really. We had liasion, exchanged liasion with them, and we had French officers around from time to time but insofar as their combat troops, I never inspected them. I never saw them in the field. So I wouldn't pass judgement on them. They had their problems at that time as you know, and whether they were combat ready or not, I wouldn't know. I just frankly wouldn't know. The British troops, I saw more of them, and they were gung-ho. They had good units. They weren't up to full strength. As I remember they were rather low ebb as far as strength was concerned, but they had good equipment and certainly fine officers and they were combat capable and made a good showing, no doubt about that.

INTERVIEWER: I know you participated in United States exercises, with in the 7th Corps and within Seventh Army, but do you remember any NATO exercises that were specifically designed to prove the military efficiency of NATO?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, the NATO concept was involved in these maneuvers in 1956. I mean, we had . . . this was a NATO setup. This was a NATO war plan that we were deployed, on a proved deployment plans that had been approved at NATO Headquarters and it was all involved in the NATO attitude.

INTERVIEWER: You were mentioning yesterday that we never have really come completely to grip with the problem of standardization of logistics supplies and the communications problem between participating nations, and that

problem still exists in NATO today, by the way. They still don't have it all solved.

GEN HAMLETT: No, and I don't think they ever will. Because there are too many national, and I might say selfish national interests involved and that includes the United States, too. So we'll never solve this problem until it becomes a catastrophe. But I do think that we've done enough towards, towards . . . in this, in this field to avoid a very bad catastrophe and probably things will get better rather than worse. But it will never be completely solved. You take the tank situation. Now the tank involves an awful lot of money and it involves the manufacturing and also natural resources and technical know-how of the best and all the nations that are involved in NATO and they all wanted a piece of pie. So somehow if you're going to have the same tank in the hands of all our different forces, you've got to spread the wealth around to the different nations and I just don't know how you can do it. I was involved as Vice Chief of Staff in negotiations. Cyrus Vance and I spent some time in Germany. We were in Bonn negotiating with the Germans about the main battle tank, and we, I thought it'd come to an agreement as to just what we would do and who would do what to who and who would furnish what and found out later after I had retired from the Army that this thing sort of fell through and never was consummated. The Germans went their way and we're going ours. And there we are.

INTERVIEWER: What were your impressions of the command structure of NATO then and now?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, then when we were based through the channel ports and our lines of communications ran up through France, I thought we were in lot better command structure and position than we are today with the emphasis shifted over to lines of communication through the German ports and Belgium and Holland which really are wide open to attack from Russian forces moving in suddenly. Much more so when we were using the French line of communications. So I think the whole structure was weakened by the French taking the attitude that they did in making the decisions that they did. Is that what you're talking about because I think it's terrible comparing the two setups. One we have today is much weaker.

INTERVIEWER: How do you perceive the effectiveness of NATO then and now?

GEN HAMLETT: I would hesitate to comment on the effectiveness because I haven't been involved in this for 12 years and that's a long time to be away from a thing of this sort. I had no particular arguments with the NATO command structure that was setup when I was in Germany at the time. I thought it would work, and I knew all along that the weak point in the whole setup was the weakness of the French, and the lack of support of the French of NATO. And this proved to be true when they virtually pulled out of the whole setup and I think this was the greatest weakening of NATO possible, to have the French bug out on them. I feel that today we have some real problems insofar, and now I'm talking about things I read in the newspaper,

about things that I'm knowledgeable on, with the Turks and the Greeks situation over there and with Italy looking communism in the face though I must say I think . . . and I know a lot of people would say you're crazy, communism is communism wherever it is, but I think the Italian approach to the communists or communism is a little different from what we think of. I don't think that the Italian communist would ever knuckle under to control from the Kremlin. This isn't Italian nature. But anyway, we do certainly have a weakening on that flank that is very, very dangerous and we've done some very stupid things politically with respect to this in my opinion.

INTERVIEWER: Such as what?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, such as cutting off the Turks at a crucial time. I admit the Turks made a mistake, this Cypress thing was an ugly business and they did violate certain agreements that they had with us, but for Congress to take the position that they did and override the State Department and in administration on this, I thought was just stupid because I fear very much that we're losing a very good ally over on that flank.

INTERVIEWER: When you were at the National War College in 1948 and 1949 you probably formed an opinion about NATO. Now, seven years later as a division commander in Europe, you are a member of NATO. Did you . . . was NATO what you thought it was going to be? Was it less or was it more

in what you had evaluated back in the War College?

GEN HAMLET: You know, we had started working on this evaluation insofar as I was concerned, when I went to the French War College because this was one of the things that was a real moot question, whether this NATO setup could work and how it would work and who would control the atomic capability. Even then, this was in '46. Great discussion about who and how, and who would have access to the weapons, and how would you control them? How would you use them? And I think that NATO was in the beginning obsessed with this type of thing more than getting down to the nuts and bolts issues of developing a strong posture insofar as ground forces were concerned, and not putting so much time and effort in the beginning on the atomic question, which was coming along, but hadn't come along far enough to really warrant all the pulling and hauling that went on at that time. I was disappointed in NATO when I first looked the situation over and had an opportunity to talk to other people in Germany about the whole thing. But the more I became involved in it, the more I realized how very, very difficult this whole problem was. And the solutions that were being made were, in my estimation, were about as good as you could expect except this French pullout, and I thought my good friend and classmate, Lauris Norstad, was a real, real fine man at the time and ran that NATO setup in a superior matter. He was a very knowledgeable fellow, and he had the confidence of the NATO people.

INTERVIEWER: Would you suggest that the United States, with its tight controls on nuclear weapons, and trying to maintain the position that they were the single power, the single super power, to hold off Russia, contributed somewhat to the decline of the NATO spirit that started in 1945 and probably continued for about 10 years? But as the NATO members could not get their hands on nuclear weapons, then their interest seemed to dwindle down, and they felt like they would not be able to defend their own national boundaries because of the United States attitude?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, first let me talk about the United States attitude. I don't think we could have taken any other attitude without going to the people of this country. There were certain laws that controlled how those weapons would be handled and they still exist the same way. And I think if the old question had been taken to the American people, you'd have a real "Donneybrook" and probably what would have come out of it would have been, let's get out of NATO completely. We just can't do this. So by maintaining, or being legal about this whole matter, we didn't make this a question for the people of the United States to decide. Insofar as our allies were concerned over there, I think there were mixed feelings among our allies. Some of them wanted more control. A lot of them didn't want any control. They were quite willing to leave this whole mess in the hands of the Americans and the American command. The French, of course, had other ideas, and this is one of the probably one of the main reasons for their pulling out of NATO as they did because they couldn't stomach the matter of the atomic umbrella being controlled by another power, and

deGaulle was a very, very difficult person, always was, to get along with and this was one of his fetishes that he wanted control, and not having it, he pulled out. And this certainly weakened NATO tremendously, although I have no idea what the attitude towards NATO is today. I know how the Germans feel about it. The Germans want it maintained and I've talked with Germans in very high places about this and to feel them out, have deplored having American troops in their communities for so long, and I've always gotten the word from the Germans, don't you worry about that. We want the American troops here. We can't do without you here, and this is the hub of our defense. So insofar as the Germans are concerned, they want a strong NATO and they want us in Germany.

INTERVIEWER: What was the, either the military or your political friends reaction to Senator Mansfield's earlier request that we get our troops out of Germany?

GEN HAMLETT: Totally against it. They don't want our troops taken out of Germany. They want our troops to stay in Germany.

INTERVIEWER: General, there has been some controversy about the balance of the forces, if you will, between the NATO and the Soviet block, both from a conventional standpoint and then a conventional-nuclear standpoint. Would you care to comment on how you all perceived that while you had the 10th Division?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, at that time I think the balance of forces were better than it is today. I've seen in the past years since I've been retired,

the Soviet forces have strengthened considerably according to the reports that I've read and things that come across on my desk on newspapers and reports that I get from various agencies in Washington that still have me on their mailing list. I think the balance of forces today is in favor of the Russians. I don't think there's any doubt about it. And I'm somewhat mystified by the rationalization that goes on and only last week, the Secretary of Defense made the statement to Congress, I forgot the words he used, but something about being "almost balanced" or words to this effect, forces were, and I don't think there's any doubt in my mind. There's no doubt in my mind that the forces are unbalanced and that we are weaker and NATO is considerably weaker than the Russians are.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think we have a technological advantage?

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, I would say that on the drawing boards we have a technological advantage, but I don't think that in the field today we have a technological advantage. I think that the Russians have just as good equipment and maybe in some instances better than we are fielding.

INTERVIEWER: Would you say that was also true when you were the Division Commander and the Commander in Berlin in the late 1950's?

GEN HAMLETT: It would be very difficult, looking back on that period, to really compare, though I did think, at that time, that I remember looking back on it that the Germans had a better major battle tank than we had,

and I did think that at the time, as I remember we had a superior aircraft to the Russian aircraft, and we were certainly staying neck and neck with them insofar as strategic weaponry was concerned. So at that time, and we're talking now about 1956 and 1957, the balance was much better, in my opinion, than it is today. I don't know whether you would agree with me or not or whether the experts and our military setup would agree with me. Most of them appeared not to. They have some way of rationalizing the fact that we're still just as strong as the other forces, and I just don't see how they do it. I don't see how they do it. Now, the question, of course, of naval forces enters into the overall picture and here again it appears to me that the Russians are really closing the gap, very, very fast in providing a Navy they will not only be a two ocean Navy, it's going to be a three or four ocean Navy. I don't know, I don't know, though I've read some things about the naval developments, whether they have the technology in weaponry that we have. I'm sure that they don't have the knowledge of seamanship and how to fight naval warfare that we do. I think we're supreme so far as the world is concerned in knowledge of naval warfare and ability to carry out a naval engagement, but certainly the Russians are coming up by leaps and bounds in developing a Navy that is not going to be second to ours.

INTERVIEWER: Along that line, I think that you could find quite a few high level people that would agree with you that the Soviet Union has

certainly fielded a much greater Army than they need to preserve detente if you will, between the east and west in Europe. Why do you suppose that they continue to build such military might?

GEN HAMLETT: I don't suppose that. I will be very bold and say, I know why their building a military might. Their objective is world conquest one way or the other. And you can go back to the earliest treatise on communists and the objectives of the Soviet Union from the beginning and their utterances. They are out to control the world, and that's why they keep building up military strength, not to use it willy-nilly, no, but as an offshoot of their political objectives, which is world control, economic control and political control. They must have the strongest military forces in the world. You can't control the world, the way they want to control it without having to back up strong military forces. Now, there are many people, if I make this statement to many people, they will say, you are a warmonger. You don't understand the Russians. You don't . . . I only know what I read, and I read a lot of things that are written by Russians and have been written by the leaders of Russia over the past 40 years and in every one of them I see the words between the lines, we are going to dominate the world because that's the way communism has to be developed if it's to survive, and this is the whole problem. And I think that there are too many people in our country that are making very

poor judgements about the Russians because they don't realize why the Russians are doing what they're doing.

INTERVIEWER: Along that line, were your intelligence gathering sources good when you were in Europe or did you feel that there was a lot to be desired or . . .

GEN HAMLETT: What do you mean? Do you mean within the division did we have good . . .

INTERVIEWER: Well, both within the division and outside the division.

GEN HAMLETT: I didn't really . . . I don't remember making an evaluation of the intelligence gathering available to our forces when I was commanding a division. I did become completely involved in this when I was commander in Berlin, and I learned an awful lot about intelligence gathering at that time that I hadn't known before, and how we did accomplish some of the things we did and then later when I was Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army, I learned a great deal more about it by being involved in the JCS arena. I would say that our intelligence gathering capability was very, very excellent. I just hope that all of these attacks against the CIA have not done irreparable damage to our ability to gather intelligence. But there are a lot of bleeding hearts in our country that don't understand the situation, and they don't realize what an ugly business this whole power struggle between the Kremlin and the western world has become, and has been for many years, and they're trying to be "Pollyanish" about it, is that

the word? I don't know. And you can't play this sort of game with the Russians. The only thing they understand is toughness and positive dealing and strength. They don't negotiate. They make statements.

INTERVIEWER: General, when I was in Europe, as a matter of fact, I vaguely remember the headquarters of the 10th Division at Grafenwohr when I got there. You were out there on some training exercises, but I was a member of the 8th Division and we used to have great competitions with the 3rd Armored Division and we used to have great competitions with the 3rd Armored Division and it seems like everything we do we were trying to outdo them. Did you have similar competition going with another division commander while you were in Germany, either in readiness, in training scores, or sports contests or any type of competition?

GEN HAMLETT: No, we were so far ahead of the other divisions that they couldn't compete with us in anything. (Laughter)

INTERVIEWER: All right, sir. We're getting up near June of 1957, and you're getting a warning order that you're going to become the commander of Berlin, and you mentioned you got very short notice.

GEN HAMLETT: I got 2 days notice as I remember.

INTERVIEWER: What were your personal reactions to that?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, I was amazed really, and I knew that I had been with the division, how long had I been with the division? I can't remember.

INTERVIEWER: One year.

GEN HAMLETT: One year that I had only, probably 8 more months at the most to go. I think the policy at that time was to permit a major general 18 months as a division commander. They felt at that time that you'd either prove you could do it or couldn't do it. I don't know, really, what the reason for the policy was, except there was a lot of people who wanted commands of division and there weren't too many divisions. So, I was rather happy in a way to get another command, though I didn't really understand all the intricate problems involved in the Berlin command when I was sent up there. I'd never been to Berlin. I was happy to get the command and sorry to leave the division, but no great worries one way or the other.

INTERVIEWER: Is there anything else you wanted to say now about the division command tour?

GEN HAMLETT: I would like to say this about it, because that was during the days of the rotation of divisions and it just didn't work out. I know that the rotation of units insofar as the personnel are concerned and the training cycle etc, etc . . . is better than feeding people in a few at a time to the divisions that are deployed. I do believe that we should try, I don't know whether they have or not so you know I'm not keeping up really with what's going on from day to day in the Army, we ought to try deployment by battalion. I think it would work. The British have always done this and it worked out fine. I saw this done in Berlin when I was there when the divisions rotated battalions into the British Berlin Command. I believe we could enhance our

whole training program if we did this, this way. Maybe we could do it by brigade, but I don't think we should try the division deployment as we had in those days again. I think it was a failure. It weakened our whole training system. I'm talking about the overall Army because it ruined the state side setup. We just didn't have anything left over here, and to take care of everything you had to deploy these divisions as divisions. I hope no one will try that again. But I've always leaned towards unit deployment by battalion, and I don't think it's ever been given a fair trial, so let's go on from there.

INTERVIEWER: This completes reel number five, interview number five, with General Barksdale Hamlett. This is the end of Side one, the period of his Berlin command is located on T.V. tapes number 351 and 352 now being stored at the television studio at the Army War College. The interview will continue with assignments after 1959.

END OF SIDE ONE.

SIDE TWO, REEL FIVE, INTERVIEW NUMBER SIX.

INTERVIEWER: Well, General, when we left off, on the other side of the reel, we were talking about your command of a division and your subsequent move to Berlin, as our Berlin session was conducted on television, we'll now skip to your period when you returned back to Washington, D.C., where you became the Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff for Military Operations. This was the time frame, January of 1960. This assignment to DCSOPS, was that due to your friendship with General Decker, or what brought this particular assignment on?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, I think it had more to do with my former service under General Lemnitzer. Lemnitzer was the Chief of Staff when I came back and also a long, long standing friendship with the then Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, Jack Oakes, General Oakes, was the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations. He had requested me as his assistant. I knew when I arrived because there was no secret between Jack and myself that he wanted to get out of the Pentagon where he'd been for a long time, and get a command, and that he certainly had in mind my being groomed to take his place. Now, I'm sure that he must have discussed this with Lemnitzer before I had been assigned to that job or I wouldn't have gotten the assignment. So it was very fortunate that I'd served under Lemnitzer when I was his assistant for planning coordination which we covered in another interview I had with you, and the fact that Jack Oakes and I had been friends since we were at the Academy together. He was the class of '28 and we'd been stationed together in San Antonio when

we were both 2nd lieutenants, and again at Fort Sill. We'd been associated with each other for many, many years and had mutual respect for the other and that sort of thing. So I was fortunate in having two friends and this is something we talked about promotion and how you get it. These are some of the things that certainly help, having friends that ask for you and push you along. I was very, very happy about the assignment because it fitted in with my background in the Pentagon from the tour I'd had before. It was just a step up along the same line of approach, you might say, to higher command and more authority. And Jack certainly initiated me very quickly into JCS procedures by going on leave and leaving me as Acting Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army without knowing my way around very well insofar as the Joint Chiefs of Staff arena were concerned. As you know, I'm sure it's common knowledge among you young people who've served in the Pentagon, the Deputy Chiefs of Staff services do a great share of the JCS business. They are given a very free hand by the Chiefs in making decisions on matters that are within policy. In other words, if you can make a decision that doesn't go contrary to Army policy and the same would be true of the other deputies, then the Deputy Chiefs of Staff can make a lot of decisions on matters that come up inter-service wise. This is important because it does relieve the chiefs of the burden of minutia in the Joint Chief's arena. But I had my baptism very quickly and I must say that the other deputies were most solicitous about a man coming in who really didn't know his way around very well, and were very helpful.

And never, in the time that I was involved in matters, that I didn't know too much about--I didn't have all the background and those problems--those inter-service problems which develop inter-service rivalry over the money problems and so forth, are very complicated and after you've been there for a year or two and know all of the background, then it's much easier to carry on discussions about it. But they were helpful. They never tried to bulldoze me into something, or trick me into making a decision. In fact, some times they would warn me, "We'd better not make a decision here because we better wait until Jack comes back. He knows all the background on this thing and there's no use in taking it up with the Chiefs again," and, "Ham, I don't think you know enough to make a decision on this." This sort of thing was very helpful. And, as a matter of fact, I found that in the JCS at that time, the Deputy Chiefs of Staff were all good friends. They were all able to sit down and discuss problems that had great impact on the services and inter-service problems, without getting upset or mad and being objective. When we couldn't come to an agreement on something, then we'd always take it to the Chiefs and let the Chiefs decide it. Not let them, but I mean, it was up to them to decide it. But I always have had the feeling that the understanding in the Joint Chiefs of Staff arena, certainly while I was there, the feeling among the deputies, who carry on most of the work, was just excellent and we never had any spitting contests or a lot of things that would be upsetting. We saw a lot of each other socially. We made trips together places to look things over that were going on world-wide. I remember one time we went down . . .

this was after I had become the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, we took a week-end trip down to look over the situation in Puerto Rico. About half-way down the Air Force Deputy said, "Oh, my God, we've got LeMay's plane and I forgot to tell him we were taking it." (Laughter) After we arrived, of course, he got on the wire and cleared things up with General LeMay. This was a very educational period in my life, really, these first months as assistant to Jack Oakes, Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations. I learned a great deal about things that we were talking about earlier where our intelligence comes from, how we developed these things. I became privy to information that I'd never dreamed of before. I mean, the U-2 setup and how it was used, and all of the intelligence business, world-wide that I knew something went on, but I never had really known how it was controlled or who did what to who and it was controlled or who did what to whom and it was a very interesting period, and still is interesting. I'm sure that every officer who's ever become involved in that side of our military setup enjoyed his service, though it was difficult, and really kept your nose to the grindstone. The hours that we worked there were unbelievable.

INTERVIEWER: General, so far Paul and I have detected a very modest individual in yourself, and I'm going to confront you with an extract of the New York Times, because your arrival in Washington for the job that you're describing, had quite a bit of notoriety. First, because it signalled that things were pretty good in Berlin, that you held command in Berlin 30 months which was

considerably above the average time of command. But there was an UPI release that said and I'd like to quote for the record, "General Hamlett's transfer to Washington was regarded here as a step toward putting him eventually in a high Pentagon post. This view puts emphasis on the importance of his role in Berlin which sits across the Iron Curtain from a huge forest of Communist troops. In the office of the Deputy Chief of Staff of Operations, he is expected to get the post a number one assistant which is vacated since Lieutenant General John C. Oakes moved up to the Vice Chief of Staff on November the 1st. General Hamlett is 50 years old, a native of Hoppinsville, Kentucky. He was one of the allied military leaders who's firm stand is credited with making the East Germans back down on their plan to fly the communist East German flag over West Berlin during the celebration last week, of the communist revolution in Russia." That's the end of the quote. Now, Sir, you never told us about that on the T.V. tape. Would you tell us what your firm stand was on that flag incident?

GEN HAMLETT: As I remember, we made it quite clear that if they put the flag up, we'd come over and tear it down or take it down, they were in violation of allied authority. Berlin, all of Berlin, was still under allied authority. This was just another one of the provocative things that the East Germans and Russians were always pulling--I don't remember too much about it. I remember, it wasn't just flying the flag it was putting flags on all of the electric cable cars that traversed back and forth across the city. As I remember, this was a problem. And we'd tell them we wouldn't tolerate such

a thing. Period. And there was a great Donneybrook about it, and they finally backed down. I don't remember getting any tougher on that one than I was on a lot of others. This one quote in this thing is wrong, though. Jack had not become Vice Chief of Staff, but Jack had been . . . he was still there when I arrived as his assistant and was for several months, and was later sent to Germany as a corps commander. He did get his command that he wanted as a corps commander in Germany. So that was wrong. I will remember going up to New York, and you know I can't for the life of me, remember the people that I was supposed to give a luncheon talk to, but a big press conference was to follow the luncheon. The press were all hepped up about Berlin, of course, like this article declares, and they were really gonna give me a going over but good. I was worried about it because there were just a lot of things I didn't want to talk about and there were also a lot of things that General Lemnitzer, the Chief of Staff, didn't want me to talk about. Fortunately, I ran into my old friend, Quentin Reynolds, and I'd known Quentin in England during the war. He went to the press conference with me and sort of acted as my protector. Quentin, of course, had been a top reporter himself and he knew every reporter in New York, and he knew the things I didn't want to talk about because I told him what my problem was, and he protected me from them. I've always felt that was pretty good, old Quentin coming down there and spending an hour or so protecting me from the press when he was a reporter himself. He wasn't at that time. He'd gotten out of the business and was writing books.

INTERVIEWER: What problems are you speaking of?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, there were things involving decisions that had been made and why they were made and who made them and things of this sort; that I didn't want to get involved in it because I'd have to reveal too much of the machinery and even get into the intelligence side of the thing. I had no secrets myself. It was just the fact of being involved between the Defense Department and also a tool of the State Department. See, I wore two hats over there. I didn't want to get caught in the middle, between the two, and there were a lot of things going on then that didn't make any difference whether the press knew them or not. And they always misquoted you. I'd learned that early in my life.

INTERVIEWER: You described probably a usual situation that exists between the military and the press. You certainly have some good friends from World War II and Korean days, and I think that today's talk is that there is not a good relationship between the military and the news media. How would you evaluate it during your period in the 1960's, before Vietnam started building up?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, insofar as I was concerned, I always felt that I had very fine press relations in Berlin, and this was important. I mean, the press relationship that I had in Berlin was valuable, because there you had all the big wires represented and the German press, too. So, I made myself available to the press corps when they wanted to talk to me, and I tried to be as straightforward as possible. I just came right out and said, "Look, I can't talk anymore about this particular problem. It involves things that

I can't talk about," but anything that I could tell them, I always told them, as long as it didn't, in my judgement, border on revealing things that would be detrimental to national defense. I had a party with the press at my home with drinks and canapes and so forth a week before I left Berlin, and they presented me, and I still have it, with a cigar lighter in the shape of a pistol, presented by the Berlin press corps, to Major General Barksdale Hamlett and so forth. And I was very proud of that because they made it quite clear to me that that was the first time that they'd ever given a military commander in Berlin any present before he left. It always tickled me because they were straightforward about that, too.

INTERVIEWER: One of the news media complaints is that the military seems to classify something either secret or confidential, or claims "national security" as a blanket protection for not discussing issues. When you were in DCSOPS, was that a practice? Did you have knowledge of it?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, the whole question of what you revealed to the press has always been a very difficult one in the military because people, when they're in the Pentagon in positions such as I occupied, and privy to an awful lot of really top secret and sensitive information, that the press has no business of knowing anything about. It's always very difficult to deal with people, who are sitting there asking you questions knowing that you know an awful lot more about this than you're going to tell them, and this has always been a bone of contention. They realize that you're not telling them the whole story and they as members of the press, and this is their bread and butter,

want this information because it would be sensational. This is always the fight. How much can you tell the press? It's very . . . it's a problem that I don't think we'll ever solve. We just have to give and take, and do the best we can with them, but certainly not release any sensitive information that may be detrimental to national defense. As long as we do this, the press is doing to be dissatisfied. They want the whole story; top secret, sensitive and in my opinion, the majority of them, who were just sensation seeker, don't give a damn whether they reveal sensitive information or not. This is born out almost daily, by things that come out of Washington. So I can't . . . I don't have many good things to say about our press today, though I had many good friends in the press and some of them have gone to very high positions. I think there's somethings going on, and had been going on for a number of years, so far as the press and military are concerned, that are just not good, and most of it is the fault of the press and not the military. I would certainly side with what the military people are doing now. I don't think we should every pussyfoot with the press and try to avoid a clash with them. I think this is the worst thing you can do or give them half truths and this sort of thing. I think you should come to a point and say, "I can't talk about that any more. It's sensitive and I'm not going to say anything more about it." And this just irritates them to no end. I've said that twice and I better quit talking.

INTERVIEWER: You obviously hit a soft spot there, General Hamlett. Television was almost 10 or 11 years old and really was beginning to develop its

editorial skills. Did you feel any special type of pressure from the television industry, either in reporting or giving picture reports of military installations or activities as an interference in anything you were planning?

GEN HAMLETT: No, our feeling at the time, as I remember, was one of being happy about having the television people appear at various posts, camps and stations and cover our activities because it advertised the Army. We had things that we were very proud of and very happy about and those were the things we tried to show. And I think television at that time, by and large, gave a very good picture of the military services, not just the Army, but all the services. The Air Force was able to get more coverage, I think, than the other services because they had a little more luxurious equipment and things that appealed more to the public than the Army and Navy. But I never had any great feeling against television at that time, certainly that they were trying to make a good show out of what we had to offer. Which was a lot better than some of the innuendoes that came out in the press about what they said we were trying to cover up. This was the thing that always hurt you.

INTERVIEWER: Let's see, you started out as the Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff for military operations and you were there for exactly 12 months before you took over?

GEN HAMLETT: From Oakes, yes. That's why I said the press release you read to me was wrong because Oakes didn't move up when I was in. I was his assistant for about a year and then he moved to Germany as a corps commander and I was made the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations.

INTERVIEWER: When did General Lemnitzer leave?

GEN HAMLETT: Lemnitzer left soon after I became the deputy, or maybe it was before. I'd have to check on that because the role, really of assistant, and being the deputy were so interwoven. I did so much work, I mean Jack was very good about letting me handle things to enhance my education, that I can't remember exactly, but General Decker was the replacement for Lemnitzer who became the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. Well, I had Decker and Lemnitzer both at the table down at JCS when I became the deputy, and I worked for Lemnitzer. Oh, I'm sure, no . . . Lemnitzer left before Oakes was promoted, because I can remember Oakes briefing Decker as the Chief of Staff with me sitting at the table. I can see the picture. So, it was after Lemnitzer had been elevated to the rank of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff than General Decker came in as Chief of Staff of the Army, from Europe. I believe he came in from Europe. I believe he came in from Europe or the Far East. I can't remember which. But he'd had a major command. He came in from one of the major commands. You asked me to go back and think of a lot of things that occurred 12 to 20 years ago that I just can't remember the exact dates on. They could be . . . but I don't think it's important really, do you?

INTERVIEWER: It's not that critical. We would like to try and isolate the things, subjects, the pressures you were handling in DCSOPS during the 1960's and '61 time frame because these are the lead-in years most to the Cuban Crisis, to the buildup in Vietnam. We were still concerned over Berlin, the

Egyptians and the Israeli's were still popping at each other, and I'm sure that it gave you considerable work and concern in DCSOPS as far as force readiness was concerned. You remember what the status of the Army was at that time? We had talked about the Army going down considerably after the Korean War and it had regained some of it's strength in divisional force. Certainly no war was envisioned; but were the pressures of the time adequate to give you enough for force development and for research development and materiel acquisition?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, I would call the period you were talking about one of building up to a better posture than we'd had. We had a better setup insofar as the Secretary of Defense and his department and support of the things that we wanted to do in the Army, than we had before. I say had before or had in years just preceeding. We had had a period when General Taylor had been the Chief of Staff, and he, as you remember, had the ear of everyone over in administration as well as people on the hill. Had been able to do a lot of things for the Army that had to be done. I think another Chief of Staff probably would have done the same thing, but he was certainly very, very good at this. And then Lemnitzer took over as Chief of Staff and he, too, had a great deal of moxie with the politicians and people who were up in Defense. It was a period when the Army was getting along better than we had for some time, and also the inter-service rivalry though we had a number of very moot questions, particular with the Air Force, and the Navy and the Air Force were always bickering about the equipment, the dollars that went into this

aircraft or that aircraft or this missile and that missile, and we had, of course, the real hoe-down with the Air Force over the missile situation which was settled by our getting the anti-aircraft missile assignment and them taking over the big missile, the inter-continental and so forth, our role that of a tactical missile people. The aircraft situation was beginning to build into a problem. Well, it started as a problem as you remember back in World War II when we first bought the little Piper Cub, the L4. The Air Force was deadset against our ever getting one aircraft and this feeling continued on and on and on, and every time we would add to our higher inventory of aircraft, you had another Donneybrook with the Air Force. This was a continual bone of contention between the Army and the Air Force up through the last days that I spent in the Pentagon. I can remember when Bozo McKee was Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force, and I was Vice Chief of Staff of the Army at the time, and I said, "Let's go back in the back room and sit down and settle some of these problems." Well, Bozo and I tried for a week or several weeks, I guess it was several months, to settle these problems and they just couldn't be settled. The Air Force Staff wouldn't buy our position and the Army staff wouldn't buy their position, and the real big bone of contention at that time was the Otter. You remember the follow-on plane after the Otter which was a high-wing, two engine, cargo plane. What was the name of that plane?

INTERVIEWER: Caribou and the Mowhawk.

GEN HAMLETT: The Caribou. The Caribou. And then they took great issue with the Mowhawk because we were getting into, in their opinion, high performance

aircraft. I was willing to agree, I remember in this whole discussion, and General Decker had given me the go-ahead if I could settle this thing to do it. If they would give us the things we really needed, the Air Force I'm talking about, and quit fussing about it, the helicopter and the Caribou and the other things that we had in the inventory already, that we would agree never to develop a jet aircraft. This, I thought, was a big concession. But it was a logical one because to get into the jet aircraft problem, you really were getting into a logistics situation which was too much for us to handle and also a training problem with air crews and all this sort of thing. Well, this fell through and I must say the follow-up on this particular argument; Johnson, after he became Chief of Staff, whether it was when he was Chief of Staff, yes, it was, he became Chief of Staff, did agree with the, agree with the Air Force to take the Caribou out of the inventory and to never get into cargo airplanes business again, and also, not to develop the jet insofar as heavier than our aircraft were concerned, not however insofar as our helicopter was concerned. The Air Force agreed that we could go ahead, as I remember the thing, I'd retired by then, with the helicopter program we had, and maintain the Caribou and the Mowhawk. And the other aircraft that we had in the inventory for liasion purposes and whatnot. This was one of the biggest bones of contention that I had to deal with in the Pentagon. The other thing that was always in the forefront insofar as the Army and the Air Force were concerned, was the intelligence collecting facilities and hardware, etc . . . because of the clash, or interpretation, let's put it, of the roles that had

been laid down for the two services with respect to what the Army was supposed to do insofar as the Corps of Engineers mapping situation was concerned. You know, mapping and the securing of information for mapping world-wide, flops over into intelligence a great deal. We had a lot of problems with the Air Force in that area, and I have an idea they still do. And they still have problems insofar as aircraft are concerned. It's a dollar and cents involved. Each service wants as much money of the budget that they can get and these things still go on, and it's not too unhealthy. It's just unhealthy if it gets to be underhanded as it did back in '55, and '54. Back then there was some nasty infighting particularly between the Air Force and the Navy. Those are some of the things. Now, of course, we were involved up to our eyeballs in that Cuban thing in the JCS and there had been so much written and said about that I don't want to become involved in the historic accounts of one way or the other, because frankly, even as the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army I wasn't cognizant of all the things that were going on because the White House took this out of our hands. This became a White House project. It was run from the White House, and in the end of this thing, we were trying to find out what was going on, you know. We were furnishing all of the equipment and people for the training of these Cubans down South, and I wouldn't say now where that training went on because I think it's been revealed time after time. I don't know whether it's still top secret or not.

INTERVIEWER: It's not.

GEN HAMLETT: But we, this was a terrible mix-up. We were involved in it and yet we had very little to say about how it was done because as I said, it

was handled right out of the White House.

INTERVIEWER: Why don't we save that for your period when you were Vice Chief of Staff, if we can?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, you asked me about this period through there and that's why they all mix in together.

INTERVIEWER: If we can come back to about 1960 . . .

GEN HAMLETT: All right.

INTERVIEWER: On the point you were talking about, there were arguments, for instance, over what the mix should be between the airborne divisions and the straight divisions. Of course, the Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development was looking for that Caribou troop transport to support the airborne theory at the time, and that was another action that was in DCSOPS, force development of air mobile forces. Another acronym which you might remember was, STRIKE, (Swift Tactical Reaction in Every Known Environment) and the development of the STRIKE Command which was supposed to be a joint activity based in Florida, that brought the Air Force, Navy and the Army together so that we could react to any flash fire anyplace in the world.

GEN HAMLETT: And we also had the "Pentomic Divisions" at that time.

INTERVIEWER: Reorganizations of the divisions themselves. We went from . . . let me give you some acronyms which you should remember, General, ROCAD, to ROCID, to Pentomic, back to the triangular shape, and all those occurred from mid 1955 up to 1962 . . .

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, I remember all of this pulling and hauling that went on and I was in the middle of a lot of it. I felt at the time that a lot of it

was just "running in place," but it did give us something to talk about. It did give us something to demonstrate that we weren't in a rut, that we were certainly looking forward and that we were trying to develop new ideas and new methods and all of this. I remember one amusing incident was, the beret question. As to whether these Special Forces type that we were training down at Benning would get the green beret and I took this matter into General Decker and showed him the beret and put it on my bald head and demonstrated it and I had two or three of these characters up from Benning who were pushing the green beret and General Decker said, "Well, that's the silliest head piece I ever saw. No, I'm not going to approve that," and that was the last of that until somebody, and they did it behind our backs down at Benning, showed it to, and this was after Kennedy made president of the United States, and they showed it to him down at Benning. He thought it was the greatest thing he'd ever heard of. So he called over to the Pentagon the day after he got back from Benning and said, "You know, I just think that green beret is the greatest thing I have ever seen. Why don't you people procure that?" So the decision was made very quickly to give the green beret to the Special Forces people we were training. But there were a lot of things like that, that I think were healthy, even though you might have adopted some and somebody, of course, is always wasted in these tests, and trying to find out what you can do and whether you should arm helicopters or not. Of course, at that time we had the Howze Report, you may remember. The Howze Report . . .

and we had to make a decision about that, and after studying it very carefully and DCSOPS whole crowd going over it very carefully and of course we'd been down to all these tests and were knowledgeable. I told General Decker that I thought we could go overboard on this, but that I did feel we had to try at least a division structure of this type of thing, and I recommended to him that we approve the formation of an air mobile division. He approved this and it was something that because of the money involved and whatnot, we had to get the JCS to at least give a nod towards it, so that they wouldn't upset the apple cart and ruin our plans. They went along with . . . even the Air Force let's try this thing and see what it's like. So that, the result of the Howze board is that we did form that division down at Benning. I guess we had it at Benning and Bragg. Both were scattered around. Training both places anyway. And that became the Air Cav Division, later in Vietnam as you remember. I've never seen after action reports. I don't know whether that worked out or not, but I'll go back and reminisce a little bit about the helicopter development program, and the big push on this started when I was Lemnitzers assistant for planning coordination back in 1954. When the G-3 section under Gavin, who was then G-3, came up with a very detailed study about the equipment that was needed to provide the entire Army with helicopters. Now, this move was to do away with the Caribou and kill that argument with the Air Force, and also included the utility helicopter instead of the L5, I guess it was, that we were using for an artillery spotter plane at the time. After

going over this program as the program coordinator, planning coordinator and program director, I took it in to Lemnitzer, who was the Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans, Operations, and Research and Development, and briefed him on it and he said, "Well, what would all this cost?" I said, "Three billion dollars!" He said, "They are out of their minds. Just send it back and say, 'We're not ready for this yet.'" Now, that was in 1955 and I'm sure that before the end of the Vietnam War, we spent many, many billions on the type of aircraft that the G-3 was recommending at that time that we supply the Army. But we just didn't have the money. I bring this up because it shows you that there are a lot of good developments you can think about, but it takes money to do these things. The state of the art was which at the time that we could have gone ahead with a helicopter program which would have produced the big helicopters that we later secured and all of this sort of stuff. That was one of the problems that slopped over into my next Pentagon assignment and one that I knew a lot about, because I'd been in on the beginning of all this, these recommendations.

INTERVIEWER: Who was making the decisions then, on the mixture of airborne, and then, the developing airmobile concept?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, I must be frank to admit that in this particular incident it was the Secretary of Defense who made these decisions because that's where the money came from and we had to sell this development to McNamara or we couldn't budge because they had taken over control by then, of the budget,

completely. This was part of the defense budget that had to be approved by the Secretary of Defense. I mean, you didn't have any leeway any more. This was when McNamara took over the running of the services. No longer a policy group up in defense. It became the operational group. That was when you had the big expansion of the Department of Defense. The staff down in the JCS expanded from, I don't remember the figures. You can go back and get them, but I think they increased about 10 fold during that period in order to support the Secretary of Defense in making decisions with the respect to forces, force structure, mix of forces and so forth. It was out of the hands of the services by then. It was McNamara who made the decision that we would have an air mobile division. Though it had to go up, but the final approval of everything by that time was in the Defense Department, of any momentum.

INTERVIEWER: Some people say that McNamara while he had certain faults of being very strict, really taught the Army a big lesson, and that was that we had the tendency to go off half cocked a lot of times on ideas without really researching them and performing necessary analysis prior to entering into various contracts and this type of thing. Would you care to comment on that?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, yes, I'll comment on it because I think there's been a lot of discussion pro and con about McNamara that I might be able to add a little bit to this discussion. McNamara was a dollars and cents man. He did not understand people. He was a man who wanted the computer and the adding machine people to come up with a cost accounting on everything that you were

working on. Now, this is fine if you are working on something that can be subjected the cost of accounting, but you can't subject morale in the services to cost accounting, and you can't subject certain developments either because you just don't know when you step off in certain new developments, what it's gonna cost when you start. And his idea was that if you started something you ought to be able to cost it, clear out to the last vehicle that came off the production line and include in that the spare parts and everything that was needed. You can't do that with military equipment. Now, you can do it with something that you've already had experience with to get the second line going for production. But it's awfully hard with the first line. You have to make a lot of educated guessers, if you want to put it that way. He never would recognize this and the people that he had making the recommendations as to which way he could go, were, in our feeling at the time, the youngsters who had no experience whatever in the military who were just making the decisions based on cost accounting. I liked McNamara as a person. I knew him. I called him by his first name. He called me by my first name. I must say that on two or three occasions when some very difficult problems arose, he'd listen to me and changed his mind a couple of times about things that were important to the Army. But he did something which I think was wrong. I've always thought it was wrong, and that was to get into the operational side of the services. The Defense Department, up until he took over, had been more policy. In other words, they set the policy and you had to work under policy directives from the Defense Department. But after McNamara

came in and developed all of these things that he had going, it was no longer a policy. He was operating the services and believe you me, at times it appeared that he was, particularly with Vietnam, was moving squads around over there, and in a way it was our own fault. It developed because of the feeling in the Department of Defense that the three services couldn't get along, that they couldn't get together on important decisions, so the decisions had to be taken out of their hands. And this was just about what happened, and his predecessor, Secretary of Defense Gates, Tom Gates, I think had something to do with this because I know he told McNamara just what I've said. "The services can't come to any agreement on major problems, so you are going to have to make those decisions yourself." And McNamara went several steps further and started making decisions on all sorts of problems that should have been left to the services. He was a hard worker, a hard worker. And made everybody else work pretty hard, too, which we all did anyway. It didn't make any difference to us, but he got into . . . really down into the nuts and bolts of everything in all the services and he was the decision maker.

INTERVIEWER: General, again, back in 1960's, I believe our nuclear delivery capability now had expanded to include Davy Crockett, ADM's, Honest Johns, 8 inch, 155, when 280 gun was still around, 155 was probably in the development then . . .

GEN HAMLETT: It was.

INTERVIEWER: And there was talk of the Corporal and of the Ajax missile and the space race. What kinds of pressures and problems did that present to you as the DCSOPS?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, the pressures involved were two-fold. One was step by step, the Air Force opposed every missile development that we made. They did not feel that the ground forces should have an atomic capability. This was their policy, and they fought us on every one of these developments of missiles. I mean, it was just a long, drawn-out fight every time you came up with a new piece of equipment as to why we should have it, why we should put money into it and so forth. They were just always opposing these things. So that was one of the pressures. The other, of course, was the development of . . . putting this into the troop structure. Where are you going to get the men and personnel to take care of these new battalions that were forming? Where were you going to cut down, because we weren't going to get in more people, and that is what we were always trying to do. We were always trying to make a case and still do, that we needed X number of bodies in order to field this new weapon that we were coming up with and projecting this into the force structure 2, 3 and 4 years, up to 5 years ahead, and then trying to sell this based on the JCS war plans. If you don't have, when you come up with something like this, agreement on the plan, then it's very difficult to project these forces for deployment. I must say that as long as I was in the Pentagon up until my retirement there was never complete agreement on the war plans between the services. We always had to weasel some part of it and leave it in a gray area so that you interpret it your way, and they could interpret it their way in order to project these new weapons and new forces and so forth. Problem again was always money. How do you cut up that budget? Who gets what

out of the overall budget? This is what causes all of the inter-service arguments. How to divide the melon. It'll always be there. And you have it within the services. I can remember many really ding-dong fights in the Air Force between the strategic air people and the tactical air people. Boy, and they get bitter. They are two Air Forces. They're two different forces. They're two different types. I don't think we ever had that, to that degree, in the Army. I mean, we could always agree on how much artillery we needed. Oh, I don't mean everybody always agreed, but this wasn't difficult. But the Air Force always had problems between tactical air and strategic air and I'm sure they still do; and the Navy, as you know, for years and even then the carrier people were in one Navy and the submarine people in another Navy. And the big warship, people in another Navy. You really sometimes ran into three Navy policies. It was hard to sort out.

INTERVIEWER: What were the squabbles inside the Army when you were in DCSOPS? Did you have the . . . let's see, there were a lot of personalities. There was General Gavin, General Taylor, who were associated with the airborne concept, you had the STRIKE commanders, you had mechanized armored leaning commanders over in . . .

GEN HAMLETT: You asked me about the STRIKE Command. I can tell you how that was developed and set up. LeMay and I did it, and it was done to enhance training between the Air Force and the Army. We just hadn't been able to get together on major maneuvers and get the money for him and whatnot, and I

really never thought that we could put this thing across. There wasn't a lot of support either in the Army or the Air Force for this particular command, and we were very anxious to get the Navy involved in it, too, and it looked good to me and it looked good to old LeMay. He was Chief of Staff of the Air Force and I was the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, and I was acting Chief of Staff the day I got together with him in the back room, just the two of us, and went over this thing word for word and he finally agreed on it. And we had to agree on who would command it and we made some horse trades. I forget just what they were, but we gave up as I remember, the command out in the Far East, one of the commands out there. Maybe I'm wrong about this. The Navy got that and then we gave the Air Force . . . we agreed to rotate the STRIKE Command, which has never been done because the Air Force didn't want it after they saw what had developed. And what has happened there? Is that still in existence? Is it still a growing concern? Or has it been . . .

INTERVIEWER: Yes, sir. General Hennessey is STRICOM Commander right now.

GEN HAMLETT: I felt at the time it was a step forward certainly in inter-service cooperation and LeMay agreed and we really drew the darn thing up and made some horse trades on command and came out of that back room and sold it to the JCS, but the Navy would never participate. We never could . . . we put all kinds of pressure on them but they never did buy. They should have had one Marine division at least involved in the thing, but I don't know whether they've ever gotten aboard or not.

INTERVIEWER: They're certainly aboard on a planning stage, but they don't participate with the materiel the way you envisioned.

GEN HAMLETT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: In those days. What were your thoughts about maintaining a

two division force in Korea back in 1960 and before the Vietnam buildup again?

GEN HAMLETT: You mean, what were my thoughts or what were the Army's thoughts and whatnot?

INTERVIEWER: In DCSOPS.

GEN HAMLETT: We thought that it was necessary to have forces in Korea in order to provide a curtain against any encroachment by the North Koreans, and they would have moved in if we moved out. And I'm not sure that they wouldn't do it right now though I don't know, but we certainly had to stay there long enough to develop a strong force insofar as the South Korean Army was concerned. I think they have developed from what I have heard and what I have discussed with people about this, very, very combat ready force in the South Korean Army. But still I wonder. I wonder if we could pull those troops out of there without doing something that would upset the apple cart. Though I'd sure like to see them brought out of there, frankly.

INTERVIEWER: There's one division left there right now.

GEN HAMLETT: Frankly, I'd like to see them brought out of there, but I'd hate to be the man who had to make the final decision on whether to do it or not. And I'm not privy to enough information to know what should be done. You know, we old, retired types, we don't get much information from you young soldiers about what you're doing.

INTERVIEWER: You'll get your turn for your interview, sir, tomorrow. Back in 1960 though, you thought two divisions was the minimum. Did you think that more was needed there?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, I don't remember that I ever thought that a minimum or a maximum figure, but I thought at the time, as I look back on it, that two divisions was about all we could afford to have there certainly, and I felt that they were needed there. Yes, I would say we all agreed to that.

INTERVIEWER: Did you get involved in the squabbles over the Pentomic division? You know, the commanders who commanded those, really upset with them. I happened to serve in one and I happened to serve in the 7th in Korea.

GEN HAMLETT: Well, there again, I was in the Pentagon during this period and I'm sure that I, as one of the people in the decision making process, went along with trying out the Pentomic division, and I don't think it hurt to try these things out. I'm glad it wasn't what the people recommended thought it was, that we were not there anymore. You know, I was in on the original test of the triangular division as a lieutenant down at Fort Sam Houston and then later down at Fort Bliss when we went out to Balmaray to test the proposed Cavalry Division. I was in those Tests from A to Z. General McNair handled the tests of the triangular division and he was certainly a wonderful person to do that, and I thought we came out of that with the finest division structure in comparing what we had had before. It was just great, and it proved out in World War II. It proved to be a very, very fine structure. I told you all about the development of the corps artillery to support the divisions insofar as as World War II was concerned. I was brought back by General McNair to . . . that was my first job when I was brought back from at the end of the African Campaign to write a corps artillery manual and to recommend to the

ground forces how we would organize Corps Artillery, under what command structure and whatnot. I think that was a good follow-on, the way we organized Corps Artillery to the triangular division setup. But those tests were very thorough. I'm talking about the tests of the infantry division. The cavalry division tests were a fiasco, and some of the wildest things went on during that test I've ever seen in my life, including things like mounted charges against strong defense positions similar to the Balaklava Campaign, Charge of the Light Brigade and this sort of stuff. The poor junior officers in the cavalry were involved in that. They almost cried at night when they'd come in from these problems that we were having because of the mess that the senior officers who wanted to keep the saber and the horse were developing, and they all knew that they had to go to armor. The horse was through. There was no place on the battlefield, a modern battlefield, for the horse, except as a pack animal in the mountains.

INTERVIEWER: Let's see now, General, during your time in DCSOPS you picked up your third star. I guess this was another happy day in your career.

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, it certainly was. I had been given indications that I would get the job when Oakes was sent out, or left to take another command, take a command or another job, but I won't say it was a terrible surprise. I had sort of expected it, but always when you're in a job and people think enough of you to promote you to the position, which had happened. I was still a major general, but doing the job. When I got the promotion, I was very happy about the whole thing. We had the usual promotion ceremony in the Chief of

Staff's office and I made remarks that you're supposed to make about how I expected to be dedicated to the job, and all of that. I've heard so many of those things that I can do it again if you want to promote me to five stars. I don't think I'll ever do it. (Laughter)

INTERVIEWER: Sir, what were the differences in the promotion system then, to BG, and to major general? It's a different system of course, now than it was then.

GEN HAMLETT: Well, the system then, of course, the brigadier general and major generals were recommended for promotion by promotion boards, but the three star and four star ranks were a matter of recommendation by the Chief of Staff to the Secretary for approval first, and then those jobs, those positions, had to be approved by the Joint Chief's of Staff. They were presented to the Joint Chief's of Staff as a staff action and the chiefs all voted on it. I can't remember a single promotion list that was brought before the Joint Chief's of Staff while I was privy to their deliberations where anyone was turned down because the Chiefs sort of had a task of agreement, wherever one chief brought up the other chiefs would approve, but that was the method of promotion to lieutenant general. Now, how did your name get on that list? Well, about every 6 months the Chief of Staff wrote to all three and four star generals in the Army and asked them for recommendations of officers to be promoted to the rank of lieutenant general. You were asked also to give your reasons and what these people were capable of doing. Now, most of the jobs on the staff, the Department of the Army Staff, went to people who'd had experience and had more or less brought up along the lines that would

give them a background and permit them to operate as a Deputy or whatever the three star grade entailed that they were promoted into, and of course those promotions were a little bit different from the ones that were made out in the command channels for Corps commanders and the Army commanders and so forth. And there were people, as you know, who attained the rank of lieutenant general and general and never served in the Pentagon. I can't recall right now who some of them were, but there were a number of them. I believe I.D. White told me once that he never served a day in Washington and he retired as a four star general from the Far East Command. But that was the way it was done. Now, I'm not sure how they do it now. I know they still have the board proceedings, but I don't know about the three and four star ranks, how they are selected, but I have an idea the system hasn't changed much.

INTERVIEWER: Who nominated you, sir, for your third star? Who was the Chief of Staff that nominated you for promotion to lieutenant general?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, I'm not sure which Chief of Staff did it, but I was promoted to lieutenant general when Lemnitzer was Chief of Staff. As I remember, so I'm sure he was the one who recommended me to Secretary of the Army and took my name down to the Joint Chief's of Staff. No, no, I'm wrong. Let me go back. It was Decker, Decker, it had to be Decker because Decker was the Chief of Staff when I was Oakes assistant. We can look that up but I'm sure I'm correct now. I'm getting confused about the number of chiefs . . . who was Chief of Staff? When? I served under a lot of Chief's of Staff in the times that I was in the Pentagon, so it's a little mixed up in my mind as

to exactly who did what to who at what time, but I'm now sure it was Decker who recommended me to three star rank and also he was still the Chief of Staff of the Army when I was promoted to Vice Chief of Staff. So you might say under General Decker's regime, I achieved the two highest grades, and we always worked closely together. See, General Decker had been the comptroller of the Army when I was Lemnitzer's Deputy for Planning Coordination and I worked very closely with him and that I'm sure he must have asked for me as his Corps Artillery commander in Germany because I was sent to the 7th Corps which he was commanding when I went to Germany as I told you before. So, here again, you have the play of personalities which mean a lot in the promotion system in the Army. There are certain people who help you along by asking for you in person when they know whether you can do the job or can't do the job, and there's a lot of luck in this, in going back to the discussion that we had about who gets promoted and why. This is one of the reasons people get promoted is because they make good on one job and the person who knows about that, having gone up himself, request him for another important job. It works out this way, and it certainly helps you get promotions.

INTERVIEWER: I'm not trying to be cynical in any way or sarcastic, but they've always called that "ticket punching" in the Army. I guess they called it that during . . .

GEN HAMLETT: No, I don't remember the term ticket punching. I don't remember any terminology for it.

INTERVIEWER: It meant that certain jobs, for instance in DCSOPS, were almost

sure steps for selection, at least to brigadier or major general, and then you already mentioned the visibility that you had to have to continue on up the line.

GEN HAMLETT: There's a lot to that, you see, and I agree with you to a certain extent, but it doesn't always work out and I could name you names and give you some examples where people were in jobs of that sort and never got promoted and were sent off on some detail to get them out of somebody's hair because they hadn't performed properly. But I don't like to castigate anyone along these lines. As a matter of fact, when I was made Oakes assistant, the man that was in the job who should of taken the job that I had over, when he was in the Pentagon and he was another general officer in OPNS was sent away on another mission because he hadn't been brought along and I had been put in ahead of him. I'm sure he was very disgruntled about it. I know he was. But there's an example. I mean, it doesn't always work out, that your grooming bears fruit. Where were we? I'm just getting promoted to three star rank and taken over as Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and General Decker was the Chief of Staff. Well, of course I'd already been involved up to my neck in JCS matters for over a year, so it really was nothing new in taking over the job. By that time, I'd acquired enough knowledge of the job and the duties, not only the Army part of the position but also what I had to do and had to know to be effective in the Joint Chief's of Staff arena. And at that time, we had some pretty tough-nosed problems going in the . . .

INTERVIEWER: This was right after the change-over from the Eisenhower to the Kennedy administration, and of course, President Kennedy brought in Secretary McNamara. It was a long 2 years for you, I'm sure, with all the changes that were going on then.

GEN HAMLETT: That's right. And we were really fighting a losing battle against the, you might call it, and we did, the intrusion of the Secretary of Defense in his staff into the personal business of the Army. I didn't like it at the time. I don't think any of us did. The other services didn't either, but the only way you could have gotten any action was to . . . as I told the Chief's one time, if you don't like this and you all agree, why don't you put your resignations in your hip pocket and walk in and tell this fellow how you feel about it. And they said, "Well, he'd sure accept our resignations." And I said, "I think he would." And there would sure be a upheaval in the United States, in the press and every place else. But the feeling always on the part of the higher command, the Chief's, when they got into this sort of bind, and it's only natural, well, what if we do sacrifice ourselves? The next fellow who comes along feels the same way we do, but he's not going to sacrifice himself. And so why should we? Why don't we stay in and keep working at the job and trying to do the best we can rather than upsetting the whole apple cart and having a Pentagon revolution. And I think they were right. A Pentagon revolution might have solved some of the problems but it really would have created a lot more. And of course they always had, and the chiefs do have, the opportunity to go over and see the President if they want to discuss problems. I remember LeMay doing it a couple of times about

aircraft procurement when he fell out with the man upstairs and went over to talk to, I believe he talked to Kennedy once and to Johnson once about procurement. And this was a fight between the Navy and the Air Force and it was over that swing-wing craft that everyone accused McNamara of giving the contract to. Who was it he gave it to? Some one of the companies that most people felt shouldn't have gotten it, and he made the Navy accept the Air Force version and it was a real bitter fight. We actually, as far as the Army was concerned, got into it, but we were neutral on this thing and frankly I didn't know enough about aircraft, nor did our people in procurement and down in the staff, to really take a position one way or the other on it.

INTERVIEWER: There's a lot of analysis today that says that the Air Force proceeded to develop at full speed, and the Army held its own at normal speed, while the Navy began a deterioration process, whereas today in 1976, as you've already mentioned, they are far behind in submarines and cruisers and destroyers compared to the Russian Fleet. Do you remember Admiral Rickover? During those days? He was regarded as a friend of McNamara in the development of the nuclear Navy. Was that a point of contention with the Army?

GEN HAMLETT: No, not with the Army, but it sure was a point of contention and discussion in the Navy, and you may remember this morning we were talking about that and I said, "It always appeared to be there were two Air Forces, a tactical Air Force and a strategic Air Force, and I always thought there were

three Navys; the carrier Navy, the big ship Navy and the submarine Navy."

I've had a feeling for many years that really, the Navy, never could come up with an agreement among themselves on exactly what they should have. Maybe it's just too complicated. The Navy problem is a complicated problem, and certainly we could never go along with the number of aircraft carriers that the Navy insisted on having, and sided quite often with the Air Force in opposing a big increase in tactical air capability. These would be the carrier's in the Navy. I don't know where the situation is right now or who's doing what to whom. But certainly the Navy, has not, in my opinion, kept abreast of the developments as well as the Air Force has, or the Army either. I agree with you. I think you're right and I'm sorry they haven't because in my estimation, there's no change in our first line of defense, and it's an essential element in national defense, a strong Navy. No doubt about it. We shouldn't, none of us should fight that problem. We should be as helpful as possible, and I think the Navy needs right now, probably a bigger cut of the budget than the other two services.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, I agree. I think that's a . . .

GEN HAMLETT: Now, I don't know where they should put the money. I really haven't the faintest idea. But I sure hate to see this Russian Navy developing like they are and our Navy lagging so far behind. We all must admit that it's a very, very expensive proposition. Ship building is just expensive, and whether Rickover was right about the number of atomic power plants we should

have and so forth, I'm not capable of even discussing it. I don't know. But I do think the Navy staff and the admiral should be able to decide this and come up with a balanced program, and I'd be willing to support them to get the money to get the show on the road and be equal if not better and I say not equal, I don't want to be equal. I want to be better than the Russians.

INTERVIEWER: General, what new social responsibilities or job responsibilities did you pick up after you received your third star?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, social responsibilities, that's hard to define. I suppose I did more entertaining because for the first time, had an expense account that I could use for entertaining people and visitors, particular foreign visitors coming into the country we've usually doled out to one of the deputies for some luncheon or dinner or something of this sort, and I lived in a representative set of quarters over on the Fort Meyer's, post at Fort Meyer's, right next door to the Chief of Staff house number 1, number 2. And it's still, I believe, a house designated for the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations.

INTERVIEWER: I think you're right.

GEN HAMLETT: I believe it is. So my responsibilities socially did become a little greater and I was invited to a lot more, a number of, you know, parties where I'd meet diplomats and politicians than I ever had been before. There was an increase in this. Some of it was tiresome and some of it was very enjoyable.

INTERVIEWER: The Kennedy Administration seemed to almost triple the pace of

social activities and some critics have said that they deliberately left the military representatives out of it. Do you share that view? That he was catering to the arts . . .

GEN HAMLETT: I did not feel this at the time at all. As a matter of fact, we felt that President Kennedy was a very good friend of the Army. We never felt, as far as we were concerned, that Kennedy was anti-military in any way. We thought his feeling was . . . I think Kennedy understood the necessity of a strong defense posture, and did what he could to develop this. Some of his programs have been counter-productive but by and large, Kennedy was a booster for a strong defense posture, and I don't know about the social side because I'd never been invited to the White House anyway. Maybe this did show up in some way that the Chiefs may have felt it, but I never felt anything of this sort and never remembered hearing any discussion about it among the hierarchy of the military in Washington. I don't know where you got this idea.

INTERVIEWER: General Decker didn't mention anything?

GEN HAMLETT: No, General Decker never mentioned anything of this sort to me at all. I do remember that President Kennedy did entertain a lot of people in the arts and show business and so forth. He was a young man. He knew a lot of these people, and I thought that was understandable. Some of the people he entertained, I don't think I would have wanted to entertain, but that was his business, not mine.

INTERVIEWER: General, do you recall what your toughest decision was when you were still, or the toughest recommendation you had to make to the Chief of Staff when you were still in DCSOPS? There was only about a year there after

you got promoted while you still stayed in DCSOPS before you became the Vice Chief?

GEN HAMLETT: There was so many things, and they were daily recommendations you made daily to the chief, both problems of the Army and problems involving the Joint Chiefs arena. It's very difficult for me to look back about which was the most important. Everything was important.

INTERVIEWER: I'm sure.

GEN HAMLETT: And trying to call out one that would be more important than the others, I don't think I could do it.

INTERVIEWER: For instance, back in 1960, the record would show that we had military advisors both in Thailand and Cambodia, and some of them were over there not in uniform but more or less posing as assistants and advisors to the military effort that was being developed in those countries. Do you remember that during the period when you were in DCSOPS?

GEN HAMLETT: Vaguely, vaguely. I wouldn't have thought that was too important at the time. We had people all over the world, some of them in uniform, some of them not in uniform, and it was routine. That was more or less routine business. So I wouldn't have felt that that was too important at all. The whole show insofar as Vietnam was concerned was a very, very slow buildup without, while I was still on active duty, any tremendous, what I consider tremendous, decisions being made. In other words, we hit a little bit at a time and this thing grew like Topsy. So it would be difficult for me to say that any recommendation made by me at this time was more important than some

other recommendations I made. And most of these recommendations dovetail, as I say, one would follow the other. If you took one step then you had to take two. Though I never felt that we should be involved in ground warfare in Vietnam. I spoke out on this from time to time. I never came out with a recommendation opposing, strictly opposing, what we were doing in Vietnam prior to my retirement. But that was before we committed any sizeable combat units. It was a matter of trying to stave off the encroachment of communism in South Vietnam and we were all involved in so-called cold war to such an extent that I don't think any of us at that time could really foresee what was coming later, and these steps were taken so slowly, one at a time, that we became completely involved before we really realized it. I never thought that we would commit ground forces into Vietnam in the manner in which we did. Of course I was retired by that time. But I can understand and sympathize with the people at the decision making level at the time. Now, hindsight, you and I and the rest of us have about this thing, certainly I think it was a great mistake. We should have withdrawn. We should never gotten too involved there. We should have stopped our involvement long before it developed into deploying combat forces. But we didn't. Now, this was occurring during my tour as the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and continued into my tenure as Vice Chief of Staff where I represented the Army man, many times when Bus Wheeler, General Wheeler, was Chief of Staff. He replaced Decker, as you remember, soon after I'd been promoted to Vice Chief of Staff. And I never

came out and spoke strongly against the involvement that was developing over there. Looking back on it, wished that I had, because I was very leery about this thing, very leery, but the whole tempo in the Pentagon was, let's stop this communist encroachment. Let's help these Vietnamese. I can't remember anybody being dead set against it, and coming out and saying so where they could be heard in the conferences. As I say, this was before the decision was made to really commit forces of any size over there. So you asked me what was the most important thing that I recommended and I think the most important thing was something I didn't recommend; and that was that we didn't become involved in Vietnam to the point where we would have to commit combat forces. I think it was a failure, and I would have to say that I shared the responsibility because I didn't see far enough ahead to speak out. I did do some things in trying to present this picture to the Chiefs. It almost got me in trouble once with Max Taylor, when I insisted that the Chiefs should hear a young officer who had come back from Vietnam with a story that was completely different from the one that we were getting with respect to the capabilities of the Vietnamese and what we should do over there, and this young fellow was really upset about the whole business. He was a smart, young officer, a lieutenant colonel, and we were getting reports from people that were going over there from the JCS staff, coming back and telling us. They were really looking through rose tinted glasses, and we weren't, in my opinion, now that I look back on it, I know we weren't getting the story that we should have been getting about some of the things that were happening over there.

INTERVIEWER: General, we're going to end this tape right here and put another one in right away just to finish up on this thought process. This is reel number five, interview number six.

GEN HAMLETT: You said it would last an hour, but it didn't.

INTERVIEWER: No, I misjudged it, sir. It's a little under.

SECTION 6

INTERVIEW WITH
GENERAL BARKSDALE HAMLETT

THIS IS IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE US ARMY MILITARY HISTORY RESEARCH COLLECTION, SENIOR OFFICER ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM. THE SENIOR OFFICER BEING INTERVIEWED IS GENERAL BARKSDALE HAMLETT. INTERVIEWERS ARE COLONEL JOHN J. RIDGWAY AND LIEUTENANT COLONEL PAUL B. WALTER FROM THE US ARMY WAR COLLEGE CLASS OF 1976. TODAY'S DATE IS 11 MARCH, WE ARE AT HILTON HEAD ISLAND. THIS IS A CONTINUATION OF INTERVIEW NUMBER SIX, REEL NUMBER FIVE.

INTERVIEWER: General Hamlett, you were discussing Vietnam and your position and some writing on that with a Mr. Vann's name being mentioned.

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, since you mentioned his name, I think it was Paul Vann. He was a lieutenant colonel at this time that I'm talking about when he came back from Vietnam and came to DCSOPS and wanted to talk with me. Now, Vann had a lot to say about what was going on in Vietnam, which was completely counter to the reports we were receiving through JCS channels. And they were so different that I wanted him to brief the Chiefs, I asked him if he would and he said he would love to, and so I went to General Taylor who was the Chairman and talked to him about Vann and some of the things that he was talking about. And Taylor sort of pooh-poohed the whole idea and as I remember, he did agree to talk with Vann, but Vann never did get a chance to brief the Joint Chiefs on the situation in Vietnam. And I remember after the whole Vietnam thing was over and whatnot, a book came out and recounted this incident in the book and used my name. I don't know where this fellow that wrote the book found out about it. I imagine Vann told him. You know Vann was killed in Vietnam as a civilian. He went back after he got out of the Army, and he was real disgruntled, I remember, about this whole situation but he was so

sincere and so involved that he went back as a civilian, and I forget what job he was on out there, but . . .

INTERVIEWER: I think he represented either the State Department or the Civil Action Affairs portion for the Army.

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, well I've never heard anything about Vann which wasn't very good. He was highly thought of by everyone who knew him. He was a very intense person and very serious person, and I'm sorry that he didn't get to brief the Joint Chiefs of Staff though I'm sure what he had to say wouldn't have made a great deal of difference and wouldn't have changed the trend of things too much, maybe it would have.

INTERVIEWER: Was his report concerning the military capability of the Vietnamese?

GEN HAMLETT: It was military and political both. As I remember most of his discussion with me was about the poor political setup and things that mitigated against our assistance program out there. That could be straightened out if we could do something about it. Oh, he had many ideas, and he was full of ideas about what should be done, and most of them sounded very plausible and very good to me. That's why I felt it would be a good thing to have him brief the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember whether or not this was before the coup, which President Kennedy was later accused of engineering, of the President of South Vietnam?

GEN HAMLETT: No, I believe it was after the coup.

I'm not sure, but for some reason I feel it was after the coup and after Harkins had been relieved as commander and

retired from the command out there, but I think if the truth were known, it wasn't just a retirement, it was a relief.

INTERVIEWER: Was General Taylor, then, as chairman of JCS, how would you describe the relationship between the Army's Chief of Staff, General Decker, and General Taylor? General Taylor, by this time, had perceptibly won the personal approval of President Kennedy and seemed to have the President's ear.

GEN HAMLETT: Well, if you remember, General Taylor succeeded an Air Force general as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and it was actually and according to sort of an unspoken rule time for the Navy to have chairmanship, but the President himself overrode the policy or what we thought was the policy and put another Army man in following General Twining, Nate Twining who was the Air Force general who was the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. Twining's retirement was normal.

He was a fine chairman and was getting along well with everybody. His time had arrived and he had reached the age where he had to be retired according to the laws as I remember. Taylor had retired but was brought back on active duty. This was rather a shock to a lot of people, in the Army it made no difference to us one way or the other. Our Chief got along very well with General Taylor and General Taylor was certainly a hard worker as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and for my money made a fine Chairman.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember the expansion of the Special Forces in early 1960-61 as a prelude to involvement in Vietnam, or do you remember it as an expansion of an area that the Army itself was developing under combat development concepts?

GEN HAMLETT: I think there was a little of both in it. I think that the concept fitted in with the thinking of many people about what might happen in Vietnam, and it was also something that many of us felt. Certainly President Kennedy became involved in this because he really chastized us early in his tenure as President about not having this type of capability for not having developed it. There were a lot of reasons and a lot of discussions over this particular thing. I remember that we were . . . in developing this program, sending people here and there. We did send some people into Southeast Asia and into other parts of the world about the same time as the Peace Corps was doing the same thing. I'm telling you this because it shows you a little family division, the President's family. At the same time that the Peace Corps was developing the idea of sending young people in groups into various countries to help them develop their agriculture and all these sort of things. I can't for the life of me remember what triggered a major incident in this regard, except as I remember, it was an article that had been quoted from a speech that I had made some place that we were developing a capability to send commando type units into underdeveloped countries to assist them. I'm not sure whether I was quoted properly or not, but anyhow it really touched a fuse over in the Peace Corps headquarters, which was under Sargent Shriver, who is now a candidate for the Presidency and was in the last election. And the first thing I knew that I had done something that had upset Sargent Shriver was the Secretary of the Army called me and said, "Come up to my office; I want to talk to you about something." And I went up there, and he said, "I just got a call from Sargent Shriver's

office and he wants to come over here and talk to the two of us about counter purposes that we're getting into, because we're ruining his Peace Corps efforts by things that we're doing and talking about in the press."

I said, "Good gracious, what's this?" He said, "Let's get this article he quoted to me, and see what the paper said about it." I hadn't even read it. We read it over carefully, and you could construe that there would be a clash if we had these forces, these small units of commando type people, the Green Berets as they later became known in the same areas that they were sending Peace Corps people in; because you couldn't have Peace Corps on one end and a War Corps on the other. Shriver and two or three of his people came over and they had really worked hard on a position. You might call it a position paper that they had developed castigating one General Hamlett for what he was doing to undermine the Peace Corps. Lord, I'd hardly heard of the Peace Corps, but we had a long discussion about this, and I tried to put their minds at ease about the whole thing/^{insuring them}that this was not anything that we were trying to counter. We had a reason for developing Green Beret type units, but we didn't intend to send them in the same areas that the Peace Corps was operating in. As a matter of fact, this was all approved by the President. He knew all about it, and I couldn't really understand what their problem was. Well, apparently some of the problem, was again, misquoting by the press of what I had said concerning these forces we were developing. It has always tickled me that we were accused of countering the Peace Corps when none of us had ever thought of the Peace Corps in relationship with the development of this capability in the Army.

INTERVIEWER: Was there a conflict over the issuance of a Green Beret for this force?

GEN HAMLETT: I think your question was, "Do I remember this?" Yes, I remember very well indeed. And I remember I quoted you sometime ago about General Decker turning down the green beret and then President Kennedy insisting that we equip these lads with a green beret. We sure did. As a matter of fact, they came up from Bragg and presented me with a green beret. I had it for years, and I was given credit for some reason of being the fellow who had started the ball rolling again on getting the green beret approved. This made a big difference with these young fellows. They wanted a green beret. I never did quite understand it. The British had a sort of a maroon beret that they wore, and I suppose they wanted one a different color.

INTERVIEWER: Between the development in Indochina of guerrillas and the concern over the Che Guevara in South America, there were probably a lot of influences for the expansion of the Special Forces.

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, yes, and the expansion was going on at that time, in order to provide these areas that you've spoken of with instructors. We were developing a capability to provide instructors who could go into Vietnam and teach the Vietnamese how to form ambushes and how to take care of all like situations. As I remember, they were nine-men teams that we were sending in, and they were very capable, very fine young men. Again, here I thought this was great. We all did. We still weren't sending people in to fight. We were sending people in to TEACH people how to fight, which we were doing all over the world. So, again, this was another small step towards involvement and this was the way the whole thing developed.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember any actions associated with the Panama Canal in SOUTHCOM? You know, later there were several rebellions and Panamanian interests wanted to put the canal under their control. Did you ever get any inkling while you were in DCSOPS or as Vice Chief that there was a movement to do that at that time?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, yes, this was a problem that was in the forefront all the time. And SOUTHCOM was developed as a major command to coordinate the actions taking place down there where the Navy was working along one line, the Army another, and the Air Force on another, although the Air Force had very little to do with it. There was practically no coordination between the actions the Navy was taking in South America and what the Army was doing in the same area. The Navy was more involved in SOUTH America per se than in the Panama situation. But there needed to be a unified commander to coordinate the whole scheme, and this was why SOUTHCOM was set up, and there was a great deal of Naval feeling against doing this. They did NOT want to come under in ANY way a unified command. They fought it tooth and nail. And I don't know, but I would be willing to bet you a lot of money they are still fighting it. They just don't want anything to do with the unified command or didn't at that time. But it was approved; we believed and the Air Force certainly supported us in our contention that this was needed and we won the day on that one. So, the last memories I have of this problem was that the Navy was still coordinating very reluctantly. You ought to ask General O'Meara about this sometime. I believe, as I remember, he was our first unified commander down there,

and I know at the time I discussed with him a number of times the problems we were having and most of them weren't with the Panamanians, they were with the Navy.

INTERVIEWER: Let's see, I had something else on my mind that I wanted to cover--it came up during your time.

GEN HAMLETT: The Bay of Pigs, of course, came up during my time there, and I think I discussed that with you the other day. It was something that we were involved in and had no say-so in, it was run by the White House. We were involved in the training program and in supply and all that, but we weren't privy to helping make decisions.

INTERVIEWER: I was stationed at Fort Benning when about 800 Cuban "officers" arrived, and they were taking officers basic training there at Fort Benning. Were you in on that decision? Or was that a State Department, White House directive, that we train refugee Cuban nationals.

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, I remember it was a directive that we train them. We may have been in on the arrangements and so forth, but . . . the whole thing was engineered by the White House. And there was no military decision process that had anything to do with it. Recommendations, yes, I'm sure that I know that General Lemnitzer, I'm quite sure, made recommendations about where we'd train, and we did have people drawing up training programs for them and things of this sort. And certainly we did provide all of the arms and equipment.

INTERVIEWER: General, let me mention some things that happened after you left the Army only to mention them to see if you can recall what the organization was in the Army to handle similar type events. For example,

we had the period of the student riots, the Kent State incident; we had the use of Federal forces at Little Rock, at the University of Alabama . . .

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, I was in on that. A lot of that occurred

while I was still on active duty. We had a war room, which was set aside for managing this sort of thing.

INTERVIEWER: Domestic emergencies.

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, domestic emergencies, we had a general officer in OPNS whose sole duty was managing this whole setup. Packler, as I remember, General Packler, was the first one of our war room people who ran that. General Abrams got in on it, too. He was one of the wheels in this business.

INTERVIEWER: Were you there for the integration of the schools in Little Rock, Arkansas?

GEN HAMLETT: Was that the time Walker got in trouble down there? He held that situation there, as I remember. Wasn't it Walker, Ted Walker?

INTERVIEWER: I thought it was . . . Patrick Cassidy that was in charge of troops going into Little Rock. I could be wrong. I knew General Cassidy when he had the division. He told me privately that he was down there and made the comment that he was down there with his troops with the scabbards on his bayonets, and there was no son-of-a-bitch in Washington that would tell him when to take the scabbards off.

GEN HAMLETT: I remember a lot of this. . . I've forgotten whether it was Cassidy or Walker who were the commanders down there. I had something to do about the setup in the Pentagon, however, and we worked very closely with the Department of Justice, and it was during

this time that I met Bob Kennedy. I saw him a couple of times over in the White House. On occasions when the President would call up and want to talk to someone in the Army usually about this problem. This really worried the President, and twice I remember going over there for discussions with the President and the only people present were Hamlett and the President and Bobby. And he was a very difficult fella to get along with, Bobby. The President was very easy to talk to and to discuss things with, but Bobby had a chip on his shoulder vis-a-vis the military. And we all felt this, everybody that had to work with the Justice Department during this period that you're talking about, didn't think much of Bobby Kennedy.

INTERVIEWER: You were there then for the challenge to Governor Wallace at the University of Alabama?

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, I believe so.

INTERVIEWER: Was the policy for federalizing troops, both the National Guard and use of active duty units developed while you were in DCSOPS or as the Vice Chief of Staff?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, yes, that's right. We did this.

INTERVIEWER: Was there ever any question of where control would be established after the troops had been federalized?

GEN HAMLETT: Always, the question always came up and had to be settled. But we never had any particular problems that I can remember, with this. There was some confusion two or three times, but we ironed it out very quickly and had no particular spillover from it in anyway.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember any attitudes at that time about either the

National Guard or the Reserves not wanting to be used in that role, for example, as neighbor against neighbor? And a decision made that an active duty unit would be sent in to relieve the pressure of those situations?

GEN HAMLETT: I can't remember the exact location that I'm going to refer to, and I'd rather not, but there were a couple of instances where we decided not to use local National Guard because we were afraid of just this thing and maneuvered it in some way so that we could have control through Regular Army command and units, rather than using the National Guard. Not because we had anything against the National Guard, but mainly because we didn't want to put them in the embarrassing position where they might have this feeling. And this was, of course, prevalent and we did use the guard in some of these instances as you remember and we never had any trouble.

INTERVIEWER: Did you work through Continental Army headquarters then, or did you work directly with the various Army headquarters throughout the United States when those domestic crises developed?

GEN HAMLETT: We worked directly with the crises force it worked out. Of course, the Continental Army Command would set up the forces and the schedule of how to bring them in and support them. But the command, if you want to call it that, let's call it the direction and guidance, came directly from the war room and usually it had to be a combined-- not a combined decision--but an approved decision by the Justice Department. Every move we made in these instances had to be relayed immediately

to the White House and the Justice Department. There was a great deal of tension over these things. TERRIFIC tension. And the command was right from Washington. As I said, we had a war room set up for this very purpose. It was our responsibility as we were the agency for the Joint Chiefs to handled these problems. And as an agency of the Joint Chiefs, we worked directly with the White House, the Justice Department, AND the troops in the field. We'd get very quick response this way.

INTERVIEWER: This required some sort of an intelligence network that has come under attack in recent years; in retrospect, do you think that the Army was really in the right business getting into that?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, if you have a mission that you must carry out, you can't do it in the dark. You're going to have to know something of the people you're opposing and I don't see how you can keep out of it if you are embroiled in a domestic disturbance if that's what you want to call it or a domestic crises. You've got to have intelligence in order to make decisions about what you're going to do and WHEN you're going to do it. And HOW you're going to do it. So my answer to that is maybe some of the intelligence gathering was overdone, but you must have intelligence or you can't operate properly. Does that answer your question?

INTERVIEWER: Yes, sir. The FBI apparently was unable to satisfy at least the Army's needs or maybe even the CIA's domestic needs.

GEN HAMLETT: Well, we didn't deal with the CIA. The US marshals in the various areas that we were working in provided an awful lot of intelligence about the area because it was in their bailiwick. I mean we were operating in their area, and they were as I remember working closely with

the FBI and in Washington we were passing information back and forth, and we had people in the field, intelligence people, too. Oh, yes, we had intelligence people working in the field also. Now, how much infiltration we were doing into the student bodies and that sort of thing, I don't know. They were doing some but I don't think it was too much.

INTERVIEWER: General, today in the organization of the Chief of Staff's office, they've created a position that is normally filled by a major general now who is comptroller oriented and deals in the very complex programming, planning, budget system as it fits into the Defense Department arrangement that you described when Secretary McNamara took over. That was obviously on the buildup when you were Vice Chief of Staff. How in the world did you handle all of the new requests for estimates, budgets, and memorandums commenting on both military strategy and military posture pertaining to the Army?

GEN HAMLETT: Just by working the hell out of the Army staff. I want to tell you we worked them around the clock to head up all of these studies. You know, it finally got so bad that I had a man come in to make a study of studies to see just how many studies we were making and how much overlap we were having and how we could straighten this thing out. Tick Bonesteel, Tick had had some problems with his eyes and had to come back to Washington because of physical disability of his eyes, and he almost lost one. And I wanted Tick to have something to do and I put him on this job, and he did a tremendous job at it. But I thought that was really plumbing the depths when you had to have a study to determine how many studies you had going and who was involved in them and why you were doing

them. During this period when we were being kabitzed by these brain trusters up in Defense, trying to answer all of their questions in a logical manner and coming up with the information that they would demand overnight on things, it was difficult and it was just a most terrible burden to the staff.

INTERVIEWER: Obviously, the Department of the Army staff began its big growing cycle . .

GEN HAMLETT: No, it didn't. When I was Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, I was given the job of reviewing the Army staff to see what reductions could be made, and I remember the figure VERY well, because I was happy to report on my way out of the Pentagon one afternoon just a little before I had the heart attack, which caused my retirement, that the Army staff had been reduced 14.9 percent during my stay as Vice Chief of Staff. Now, this wasn't easy. I got into some REAL fights with the senior staff officers over people that my management group recommended that we relieve. For instance, in every staff section we had an executive and an assistant executive. And nobody could prove to me what that assistant executive did. I mean it just didn't make sense to have an executive and an assistant executive. So, the first thing I believe we got rid of was the assistant executives in all the staff sections. This went on in a continuing process. I don't think the Army staff needed any increases at the time. We could handle the jobs we had; what we needed was fewer of these studies being demanded. They weren't needed. And if we just brought people into the Army staff to take care of these requirements that were being generated by

Defense, it wasn't the right thing to do. So we didn't increase, we decreased the staff, though it wasn't a pleasant procedure.

INTERVIEWER: I'm sure you noticed since the last time you visited the Pentagon that it has grown considerably since 1962.

GEN HAMLETT: I don't go to the Pentagon unless I have to. (Laughter) I don't want anybody to think I'm looking down their throat.

INTERVIEWER: General, what would you recall; what would you remember as your most significant action then when you were Vice Chief of Staff with General George Decker? Or the most significant event applying to the Army?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, I think I've been covering them all.

INTERVIEWER: I mean, is there one that sticks out in your mind?

GEN HAMLETT: No, there isn't one that sticks out more than any of the others. All these things were important. The most expensive recommendation I presume that I made to General Decker--and it was not long before he retired--was that we develop the Air Mobile Division, which had been recommended by the Howze board. They recommended six divisions, as I remember or maybe it was four or five, but I think it was six. I knew at the time that this was getting us into a REAL money problem. I knew that because of my background in my other tour in the Pentagon, when we went through a study of what it would cost to develop the type of aircraft that we were now getting ready to develop; and the numbers that would be needed to support this Air Mobile Division, PLUS all of the other helicopters that we were requesting as a requirement for our Army divisions and our corps echelons and so forth. We were talking about BIG money, BIG money. And it continues to be big money. That and tanks;

recommending a new battle tank, which we all agreed was a necessity, and I'm not sure we've ever developed it. I'd covered this the other day. One of my last actions in the Army was to go to Europe with

Secretary Vance, Cy Vance, for a two-day discussion in Bonn with the Minister of Defense; Strauss was the Minister of Defense. I'd known Strauss before; I'd known him when I was the Commander in Berlin. I knew some of the other Germans, and I think one reason Vance wanted me to go with him was because he knew I knew these people. We had long discussions and I thought very good agreements with the Germans about the development of the main battle tank, and later papers were signed based on the agreements that we had reached tentatively during these discussions. But I haven't seen that battle tank yet. I don't know whether they have it or not. Do you?

INTERVIEWER: Well, we have the M-60; and the M-60A1 with the mod on it that we thought we had an agreement with NATO on, but Germany has a different one.

GEN HAMLETT: Well, somewhere they went away from what they all had agreed. I know Strauss was behind it; he thought it was a good thing. But he was relieved of his duty sometime after that. I don't think he has any political moxie any more. He's a smart character though. He was a smartie, that fella.

INTERVIEWER: Well, General, you were, as you pointed out earlier, very elated to be promoted to lieutenant general, but, let's see, that was in 11 March 1961. And, of course, our research shows that just a year later you were made a General. And that, of course, goes along with your

being the Deputy Chief of Staff for Military Operations and then becoming the Vice Chief. Would you care to discuss the things that happened building up to your becoming the Vice Chief and getting your fourth star?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, this was a maneuver in promotion which I never did quite understand. As you may remember, General Eddleman, Clyde Eddleman, was the Vice Chief of Staff and General Decker was the Chief of Staff during the latter part of my tenure as Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Operations. I knew that some changes were in the offing. It had become quite obvious to a lot of us that General Decker--whether of his own volition or some crossing of swords with the Secretary of Defense, I never knew because he never discussed it with me--would probably move out as Chief of Staff before too very long. This seemed apparent to a lot of people although I thought General Decker was a fine Chief of Staff and was doing a good job insofar as the Army was concerned. I had the feeling that he and McNamara just weren't teeing off too well. ,

All of us had the same feeling about the Secretary of the Army and McNamara, though they were both Kennedy men and on the Kennedy team. As you remember, the Secretary of the Army was Mr. Elvis Stahr. Elvis Stahr, again, I bring this out because these things are interesting in this promotion business, Elvis was an old friend of mine, a personal friend. When I served under Lemnitzer, as his Deputy for Planning and Coordination, Elvis Stahr had been one of the younger assistants in the Office of the Secretary; and we both, being from Kentucky, and as a matter of fact, our fathers had been friends, had known each other, saw quite a bit of each other in the

Pentagon. It wasn't a social thing it was just the fact that we both liked each other. Well, he was the Secretary of the Army at the time, and I had a feeling that things weren't going too well between Elvis and McNamara, and I think later, things occurred that bore this out. One day out of the clear blue, I was told to get in touch with two officers and bring them into the Pentagon for conferences with the Secretary of Defense. These two officers were Oakes, who was commanding a corps in Germany, and Freeman, who was also commanding in Germany. I believe at that time Freeman had the Seventh Army. I'd have to go back and look at the records to see just what Freeman was doing then, I'm not sure. I know Oakes had a corps. Well, these two gentlemen came in and I had become curious and had asked General Eddleman what they were coming in for. Well, he said, "There are going to be some changes made in the whole command structure around here, and I'm retiring." He had been threatening to retire for some time. . . . His health wasn't too good. By the way, he's one of the very fine officers that I served under in my career in the Army. A great person. And a very capable officer. And he said, "By the way, these promotions are going to involve replacement for me, which will be a four-star promotion, and some other changes to be made in the command structure overseas. But don't worry about it, you're not going to be promoted, you're not going to be in on this deal." And I told him I didn't expect to. After all, I'd only been a lieutenant general for one year, and I had what I thought was probably the most important job in the Army including his. And he laughed and chuckled because he understood what I meant. And I wasn't ambitious for the job

at that time. Well, he said, "Don't worry. Your promotion will probably come along in the next two or three years." And I said, "Well, thank you very much. I hope everybody's happy when they get promoted." And that was the last that I discussed this thing with General Eddleman. Oakes and Freeman, of course, both of them are dear friends of mine, were in my office trying to find out from me what this was all about. Why was the Secretary interested in them, why had they been brought in, and as I remember both of them also had an opportunity to talk with the President at the time. And then they left. This shuffle took place in a very strange manner. I was called into Elvis Stahr's office and he said, "Well, congratulations, Ham." He stuck his hand out and I shook hands with him and I said, "What for?" He said, "You're the new Vice Chief of Staff." And I don't know to this day what happened. What changed the signals, but apparently it was done, . . . I was told later, . . . the whole business was wrapped up between Secretary McNamara and the President and that they made the decisions on this business. And Oakes, whom all of us thought would be given the USAREUR command, didn't get the command, he got the Army command. And Freeman was given the USAREUR command.

None of us ever understood what had happened. Unfortunately, Jack, Oakes was not too well at the time. He was having physical problems. This may have entered into it, but he was a fine officer. And there was no feeling among the three of us--and to this day I've never felt that Oakes thought that there was any throat cutting going on--and there certainly wasn't because as I said before, I

was quite content to stay on the job as Deputy Chief of Staff because I liked the job and I enjoyed it. Well, soon after this, and you could get the dates from the records, General Decker did retire, and Bus Wheeler (Earle G. Wheeler) was sent in as Chief of Staff of the Army. Now, Bus had been down in the JCS where he had become very friendly and very well known to the Secretary of Defense, Bob McNamara, and I'm quite sure that Bus was selected by McNamara as the Chief of Staff of the Army. And it was a good selection. I agreed with it at the time. Or thought at the time that it was a fine selection. When Bus came in, of course, you always felt that here's the number two man, and although Bus and I had known each other for years, we'd never worked together. But I felt that I could work with him so the first day he was there, I went in to lay the thing on the line. And find out whether he wanted me to stay there or not because a man likes to have his own fellow in there as his number two man, and I didn't know whether he had somebody else he wanted to bring in or not. But I wanted to make it clear to him that I wouldn't feel badly either way. If he wanted me to stay, I certainly would be loyal and work for him if that was what he wanted. Fortunately, that was what he did want. He did not want someone else and he was happy he said to have me as the number two person. And I must say that during the time there, when he was Chief of Staff and I was the Vice Chief of Staff, we worked as a very, very close-knit team. He was so busy with JCS matters and Defense matters in that area, that it was necessary for me as Vice Chief of Staff to run most of the Army side of the house.

He was the man who made the decisions, but I was doing all the

discussing with the staff, most of it, and then taking these problems when it had to be a Chief of Staff decision to him with my recommendation. And I must say that in the entire period we worked together, he never turned down one of my recommendations. So, you can see how smoothly things worked when you have that sort of coordination between the two people who had those responsibilities. And also another thing that made it very pleasant working in this area was the fact that we had outstanding men as Secretaries at the time. Starting with Elvis Stahr, and then Cy Vance, and then Steve Ailes, and these three TOP, TOP caliber, VERY intelligent people. People who would listen and who knew how to evaluate the problems and make decisions that were sensible. And I think that whole period was a very smooth one for the Army insofar as the things we were doing because of the fact that we had at the top a fine Secretary and an outstanding Chief of Staff.

INTERVIEWER: What do you attribute the rapid turnover of the Secretaries to?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, this is always a problem with civilians who come into Washington to take jobs. I mean, they have lots of outside pressures. They soon find out that they're losing money every day by staying in Washington, and they find that the problems which they thought were simple aren't so simple, and then again you run into the power struggle. There's always a power struggle going on there, and it still goes on every day and people sometimes get tired of the struggle and some win and some lose, and that's why things turn over in Washington a lot. A lot of politics involved. Fortunately, for us, the three people that I talked

about, only one of them, I think, had a falling out with McNamara, and I can't document this. And I'm talking now of Elvis Stahr, but I know Elvis was disgruntled

He was offered a job as President of Indiana University, and this was quite a feather in his cap because he was an academic type. He had been Chancellor, I believe, at the University of Kentucky. He had had several big jobs in the educational field, and this was a step up for him in the academic field. So he took it. He later, after leaving Indiana, became President of the Audubon Society and still is as far as I know. He was down here a couple of years ago. That, but the other two secretaries stayed on for a number of years. Vance had been the General Counsel of the Army and then moved up to Assistant Secretary of Defense. And then moved back down as Secretary of the Army and then went up again to Defense later on, so this was just shuffling back and forth of you might say of a McNamara staff. Ailes was the same way. He'd been an Assistant Secretary and then became the Secretary of the Army and was a very, very good one, too, by the way.

INTERVIEWER: How involved did . . . you pointed out that the Secretary of Defense got involved in the promotion of the higher levels. How about the Secretary of the Army, were they . . . maybe it was just a little misleading that in your particular case that McNamara got involved, but do you feel that the Secretaries normally get involved?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, yes, I should say! And one of the most involved in

this promotion area that I know of, by personal, by personally seeing what was going on was Secretary Brucker. Brucker had his nose in promotions all the time. And it was very embarrassing from time to time that we had to just tell him flat out that this was a matter for the board to decide, not for him to decide. And he never did understand this, because he felt that the Secretary of the Army should be able to promote anybody he wanted to. Oh, he understood it, but he didn't like it. He chafed under it from time to time, because he had his team and people he liked and so forth and so on. No, I would say that during the period that we're discussing now from my observations, no one was promoted to a four-star rank that wasn't approved by their own Secretary, and two, by the Secretary of Defense, and the President of the United States. He got into the act, too. So, this selection procedure to four-star rank, particularly when you were going to work in the Pentagon, in the arena of the Secretaries, they had quite a bit to say about the selections.

INTERVIEWER: Of all the Secretaries you worked with, General Hamlett, which one would you regard as the most effective and productive for the Army itself?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, this is a difficult one because you had to weigh so many facts here. I would say the most dyed in the wool, Army man, who just fought, bled and died for everything that he could get for the Army, was old Brucker. Brucker was a fighter for the Army. Now, he was sort of a bull in a china closet from time to time by going too far; and as a matter of fact, it got so bad between Brucker and Gates, I mean the vendetta that they had for each other, that he became ineffective as a Secretary of

the Army, in my opinion. And other people agreed with me. Ailes and Vance were both TOPS. It would be difficult for me to say which one was the most effective. I would off hand say that Vance was because of his closeness with McNamara at the time. He got along a lot better with McNamara than anyone else in the Pentagon. And Vance was a very astute fellow. He had a lot of political savy and he was good over on the Hill. And he had the ear of the President. Not that Ailes didn't either, but I mean to a certain extent, I think Vance outshined him in these areas.

INTERVIEWER: When Secretary Calloway left the Army recently and became the Chairman for President Ford's committee, one of the incidents that came up after he departed was a complaint that as Secretary of the Army he was never permitted in the Joint Chiefs of Staff war room to receive any briefing of what was going on across the board. He did not exclude the Army war room, of course. Did you provide briefings to the Secretaries when you were both in DCSOPS or arrange for them when you were Vice Chief of Staff? Or was there a communication problem at all keeping the Secretaries informed as to what was going on in the military?

GEN HAMLETT: No, we had no problem. I remember one of the methods that we used to brief the Secretaries was a breakfast--I think it was every Thursday morning when the Secretary would have either Bus Wheeler or me into his office. It was Bus if he was there, and if Bus was off on some business, he would have me in, and we'd sit there and talk for a couple of hours, just TALK about all the problems and what he thought of them and what I thought of them. But the Secretaries that we had then didn't want to get in that JCS business. They wanted to know about it,

but they didn't want to get involved. Actually, I would say in some instances they tried to avoid getting mixed up in it when they were pulled into it because of budgetary reasons. The budgetary procedure, that is the building of the defense budget always drags the service chiefs in to matters that are generated by war planning, and that comes out of the JCS deliberations. So, it was necessary to keep them knowledgeable by talking to them about these things. I saw no reason then for Secretary briefings by the JCS and I don't know why Calloway was upset about it, for his not being briefed down in the JCS arena, that wasn't and isn't their business.

INTERVIEWER: I think maybe he was suggesting that to keep informed, on ALL matters, made him a better Secretary of the Army, because by being briefed he would know what the Navy and the Air Force were talking about and what they were doing.

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, well, they knew what they were doing. When I was there, we kept them informed of all these things. And we had, of course, weekly meetings of the staff that were attended by the Assistant Secretaries and we had one meeting each week that was attended by the Secretary of selected staff members. As Vice Chief of Staff, I was sort of the nominal chairman of both these committees. I think that still goes on. I don't know why Calloway was complaining. Certainly if he wasn't getting enough information, all he had to do was tell his Chief of Staff, and I'm sure he would have been told what was going on.

INTERVIEWER: You mentioned General Wheeler having to operate with the JCS for an extended period, of course, we all know . . .

GEN HAMLETT: Well, it's not just General Wheeler; it's, that any Chief of Staff becomes so involved in the JCS deliberations that somebody's got to take up the slack and do a lot of the work . . . that before we had a JCS, before World War II, the Chief of Staff of the Army could do. But not any longer. He's the man who's just beaten to death by so many things that he has to do.

INTERVIEWER: That was my point, the demands on his time must have been . . .

GEN HAMLETT: Just terrible, just terrible.

INTERVIEWER: And a lot of the daily jobs fell on your shoulders.

GEN HAMLETT: That's right. I ran the Army staff, this is what I'm talking about. The staff down in the operational and planning division of the Deputy Chiefs of Staff for operation's bailiwick dealt directly every day with the Chief of Staff briefing him on all of the JCS papers and plans and whatnot, and this just took up a great deal of his time. Now, unfortunately, I had to keep abreast of these things, too, and the Vice Chief of Staff still does, I'm sure; because

the Chief has to make certain trips and inspections and whatnot, then the Vice must go down there and represent the Army as acting Chief of Staff. And you can't just hop in and hop out of these things. You have to get a briefing on them almost as often as the Chief of Staff does in order to be cognizant of the, you might call them innuendos of deliberations that are going on down there. So I, though I didn't have to have the knowledge that he did of these things, I did have to know what was going on. Usually after the fact, I would get the Deputy Chief

of Staff in and say, "What went on down there in the Chief's deliberation today? What did they say?" And he would give me a quick rundown, for example he would say, "You remember that paper?" And I'd say, "Yes." "Well, this is what they decided to do," and so I was cognizant, but I didn't have to sit there and go all through the deliberations unless Bus was away and I was acting as Chief of Staff of the Army.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember who the Chief of Naval Operations was at the time when you were Vice Chief of Staff?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, yes, Burke, Arly Burke. The first part of my tenure in the office, and then we had--oh, what's his name? I can't recall his name right now, but he replaced Burke when Burke retired.

INTERVIEWER: How much work did you do with the other Vice Chiefs of the other services?

GEN HAMLETT: Very little, except when we met each other at the JCS deliberations when we were either called in because it was something that we all needed to know about, and this happened from time to time. Usually when they were working on the last go-around with the budget, the Vice Chiefs would be called in to sit with the Chiefs and deliberate on the things that happened. I know several times under McNamara when he wanted the Vice Chiefs there. When I look back, I recall I knew the other Vice Chiefs very well; we saw each other at social functions and we were very compatible. Funny thing, not funny rather tragic, I had a heart attack in March of 1964 and wasn't expected to live. I was out in Walter Reed flat on my back. It was during the period when General MacArthur was in his last days, and they had me there in the same floor

with MacArthur because they thought we were both going to die. I pulled through, but during this period, the first week I was in the hospital, the Vice Chief of Naval Operations had a heart attack and was taken out to Bethesda and died that night. Now, Bozo McKee was an old friend of mine. He was in the class of '29 at the Academy and I had known him. We had lived in the same division for three years. Came to me when I was able to have visitors and said, "Well, I just wanted to tell you, I just wanted you to be the first one to know that I'm retiring." I said, "Well, Bozo, why?" He said, "Why? With you lying here like that, and that other fellow already dead? I'll be next, but I'm going to get out before it happens." (Laughter) And he did, he did.

INTERVIEWER: What was his job at the time?

GEN HAMLETT: He was the Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force.

INTERVIEWER: Do you suspect any of this was in reaction to the disappointment that the military must have felt after the Bay of Pigs activity?

GEN HAMLETT: No, I don't think that that was connected with it. As a matter of fact, the military, . . . we didn't take any blame for the Bay of Pigs. We hadn't had anything to do with the decision on the Bay of Pigs that I know of. Certainly we furnished the support, as I told you before, and all that, but the thing was handled by the White House and the CIA, and they were running that show.

INTERVIEWER: The, was it the missile crisis in October of '61? The Cuban crisis?

INTERVIEWER: Yes, I think so.

INTERVIEWER: We were talking about a number of things that were happening in the United States during the period you were either in DCSOPS or as Vice Chief, and we never mentioned the missile crisis itself when President Kennedy gave his ultimatum to the Soviets to remove and stop their ships. Can you recall any of this?

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, yes, we were right in the middle of that. The military. And, of course, we were moving troops during the whole debate that was going on with the Russians; and when those ships were moving towards Cuba, we were ready to go or we were betting ready to go. It was a serious, a VERY serious situation. And I remember one thing, we moved a lot of antiaircraft artillery down to Florida. I went down there to inspect them, and they were having a tough time insofar as their living conditions were concerned. They were out in the middle of fields and didn't have proper water and all that sort of thing. But we got it straightened out and kept them down there for some time as you remember. Opened up new airfields down there. I mean there was a lot of movement. The military was right on its toes during this whole period, and as I say, we were ready to go. We were going to make the deadline. We would have been ready to go into Cuba if this thing had gone on. No doubt about it, and there's no doubt in my mind that Kennedy would have gone in there. Whether we would have gotten embroiled in an atomic exchange, I don't know. I don't know. We were ready both ways.

INTERVIEWER: Of course, the way the President developed it, it was going to be a confrontation at sea first, and then at the same time or a little later it was going to be a more conventional confrontation.

GEN HAMLETT: That's right. We weren't going to cut loose with the atomic weapons. I didn't mean it that way, but I think that he had the will, though, Kennedy did, to have ordered that. We felt that he did. I've read things in the years, last few years, have indicated that he was bluffing, but we were getting ready. We didn't think it was a bluff.

INTERVIEWER: I share your opinion. I thought he had committed himself to a point he could not return from.

GEN HAMLETT: Absolutely, absolutely. The Russians were the ones that had to back off, and thank God they did. It was a very sensible move on their part.

INTERVIEWER: What was the readiness of the Army unit when you ordered them? I'm sure the Airborne Division . . .

GEN HAMLETT: As I remember we had two divisions that were ready and when we alerted them, they moved very quickly. The rest of our divisions in the states were in various stages of readiness, but we had at that time two divisions which were in good shape.

INTERVIEWER: Those were very intense times.

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, yes, very intense times. I'll go on to just carry on because we don't have too much time to talk about this business of my being the Vice Chief of Staff. I was out in Pakistan, visiting the Pakistani people out there, when Kennedy was assassinated. I had become very friendly with the Ambassador from Pakistan, and I had known their leader out there, Auyub Khan, when he had visited the States back in 1953 or 4, I forget when it was exactly. But I was in Lemnitzer's office at the time, and he and Lemnitzer struck it off very well indeed, and they

had me in to take part in some conversations they had. So, I had met him before, and I never knew exactly why I was invited out there, but the State Department had something to do with it, too. And the Pakis were feeling at the time that we were paying too much attention--and the U.S. always did, you know--to India and not enough to them. And they wanted a military type, particular Army type, to come out there and talk to them and see what they were doing and then go back and help them. That was the whole ploy in this thing. I understood that. And I flew out there with a small staff and my wife went along, and we had the old plane. I forget the name of it, the old Waddling Goose or something like that. That had been used by President Eisenhower, and

they put on quite a show for us. Inspections and dinners and honor guards--it was quite a business, and I was in bed asleep in Ralwalpindi when about 4:00 in the morning, or maybe it was 3:00, my aide came in and shook me and said, "Wake up, General, wake up. You've got to get up." I said, "Why?" He said, "President Kennedy has just been assassinated." I said, "Dave, I don't believe it. I just don't believe it. We're not stupid enough to do that." He said, "I've been up for the last hour, and I felt just like you did, but I have talked to the Chief of Staff of the Paki Army, and he says IT IS TRUE." I said, "Well, that's too bad." I got up then and immediately cancelled all further engagements in Pakistan, and, really, these people were shocked and went in mourning over Kennedy's death. I didn't realize what a worldwide following and reputation President Kennedy had until this occurred, and the Pakis were just terribly upset about this. They agreed that the only thing I could do was to get in

my plane and head back for the United States, which I did, and we had engine trouble. I didn't get back in time for the funeral, but I did get back in time to help wrap some of the things that had been going on there. Tragic thing, tragic thing. And I would be less than frank if I didn't say that the new President was nothing like, in my opinion, as effective as the old one. I never had much admiration, if any, for President Johnson. He was a typical country politician in my estimation, and having been married to a Texan girl and knowing a lot of Texas people, who for years had been telling me that this fellow was a crook and no good, he had to prove a lot to me and he never proved anything. Now, that's a hard thing to say about your President. And I didn't say it as long as I was on active duty and working you might say for the man, as Commander in Chief, but I think that Johnson was the weakest President that we've had in my lifetime. And got us into more trouble and in my opinion, in my opinion and I couldn't document this but in my opinion, HE was the man who really started the big buildup in Vietnam, which occurred after my retirement. But as an indicator and this may be of interest to the historians, . . . one morning Bus Wheeler called me on the intercom and said, "Come on and walk down to the JCS area with me." And I went over and joined him, and we walked down the hall, and he said, "I've just been over and talking to the President, and, as you know, he's very involved in the campaign." This was when he was running for election. And he told me, and I don't know how to take this, that, "He was going to be elected." And he didn't want any problems to arise with respect to Vietnam that would have any effect on the election. But

that after the election, he was going to do something about that thing, and he was going to shake the American people." Now, that was told me by the Chief of Staff as we walked down the hall of the Pentagon. So, I've always felt that he was the . . . it was Johnson's war. It's been called McNamara's war, but it was Johnson's war. And he mishandled it from start to finish. And the worst thing he did was his NOT calling up the Reserves. He ruined the Army. It was practically impossible for us to have a real good fighting force over there because of the way the personnel were handled. And you had no one at grass roots level except draftees, who could talk about the Vietnam situation to the local people. Had the Reserves been called up and become involved in this, you would have had mature people telling the home town people about what was going on. And I think this would certainly have been, . . . it would have helped to make this thing plausible to the American people, who turned against the whole thing in the end. We all know that. No use in trying to hide it. Well, that brings me to the end of my career in the Army. I did have a real massive coronary which knocked me out completely. It was soon after that trip to the day after that trip that I talked with Cy Vance about the tank and the German people. So, that leaves us now, when I am out of the service, and I don't think there's any particular reason for covering my life as President of Norwich University unless you all want to get into that.

INTERVIEWER: You had some ROTC when you were at Norwich?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, Norwich is the . . . , and is recognized by the Army as being the forerunner, the Norwich program was the forerunner of the

whole ROTC program in the United States. It was the beginning of the reserve officer training program, and it started in 1819. I won't go into details on this, but Norwich was founded by a West Point graduate who had been superintendent just before Thayer. And he had gotten into a lot of problems down at West Point and he and Thayer had had a clash and a lot of things had happened, and he's been degraded to some extent by the people who made a hero of Thayer but Alden Partridge was the man who started or rather who pushed at that time the concept of the civilian soldier. And the training of the civilian soldier. And the mission of Norwich as developed by Alden Partridge in 1819 was to produce young men who could either fight if they needed to fight for their country, the new country, or become engaged in civil practices, such as engineers, . . .

it was an engineering school, the first engineering school outside of West Point. It's an old, old establishment, and the oldest ROTC college unit, you might say, in the Army. It's much older than--or rather in the United States, not in the Army. It's much older school than either the Citadel or VMI.

INTERVIEWER: So, actually you joined a university that had a very strong pro-establishment feeling about the military mission itself.

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, yes, that's correct. However, during that period of student unrest, which really started about the middle of '67. We didn't have anything until about the middle of '67. The youngsters in Vermont and the areas up in the New England, up in New England, where we drew students, became aware of this student unrest and so got unrestful themselves. You know, students follow trends like that.

And we had all the problems at Norwich that you had in any other school at that time except we had them under control. And they were under control more because of the students than because of the faculty. We had a student organization which controlled these things, whereas, other schools didn't. Now, the students, as far as I was concerned, were much more conservative than the faculty. I couldn't depend on the faculty.

You never knew what they were going to do. But I knew exactly what the students were going to do, and my problem with the students was to keep one faction of students from tearing into the other faction. And it was quite interesting. It was quite interesting, but because of our organization as a military college, this thing was very easily controlled.

INTERVIEWER: You had some student disturbance. Did you ever have any riots where the consideration of the Vermont National Guard or the Reserves was . . . ?

GEN HAMLETT: None, none. We had a couple of, you might call, confrontations, where students got out of hand. At one time they were trying to pull the flag down . . . I can't remember now what it was they were going to do with the flag. But it was after that incident where the National Guard got involved at Kent State at Norwich. They all gathered around the flagpole and two or three of the most vociferous of our left wingers were trying to pull the flag down. And other students were trying to keep them from it, and we were about to have a hoe-down between the lefts and the rights in the student body and I went out and ordered this young man to turn the ropes loose, the lines loose on the flag, and he did, finally. Then I called a meeting of

the entire student body. We just called classes off for that afternoon and had a meeting in the gymnasium with the entire student body. I gave them a talk about various things and what was going on and what my position was and particularly with respect to the flag. It was not something that we played around with. There were questions and some bickering, but they settled down. Things went along all right. But we had problems. There was always, during that period, something coming up. The right wing faction of the student body wanted me to kick this young man out summarily, but I didn't do this because I didn't want to make a hero of this youngster insofar as the left wing was concerned. But he got himself in so much trouble later on that I had to kick him out of school, not because of what he had done with respect to pulling the flag down, but because of other things he had done. He was a son of a lieutenant colonel in the Army, too. I don't even remember his name. If I did, I wouldn't mention it. But it was a very interesting seven years that I put in at Norwich University. I learned a lot about the younger generation. Things that you don't learn in commanding troops, and, of course, I hadn't commanded troops since I had been in Germany. My last command had been in 1960, wasn't it? You've got all the records there.

INTERVIEWER: Your Berlin command.

GEN HAMLETT: Right. Berlin command, when I left there, I hadn't commanded troops. Oh, I had made lots of visits to troops, but you don't learn anything about what's on the soldier's mind by just making inspections. You have to live with them. You have to live with them, and I did live with

these youngsters. And they were in my office practically every day for one reason or another and the door was open. I always liked to talk with them, and I was really, . . . I will say this, I was impressed by the youth of our nation. Even during those unsettled days with students, there were SO many fine youngsters there that you couldn't help but admire them... the way they were groping for solutions to problems and I must say the problems they were trying to solve were things that we were all trying to solve, but it takes time. It takes time.

INTERVIEWER: By the time you left Norwich, of course, there were some veterans coming back from Vietnam who were coming back to college.

GEN HAMLETT: We had very few coming to Norwich. Most of them were officers who were on leave to take a course in engineering. Norwich is a well known engineering school, and we had several young captains. But insofar as enlisted personnel getting an education, we had only one or two that I can remember because none of these enlisted ranks who were getting out wanted to go to a military school. This was . . . , they didn't want to do this. When they did come there, they had former military service with an honorable discharge and whatnot; I would not put them in the Corps of Cadets. I carried them as special students and they were required to live out in town and attend classes. I had maybe a half dozen, each year, during the period '66-'72, who were special students; most of them were married, and it didn't cause any problem in the school. The cadets got along with them all right.

INTERVIEWER: How many cadets did you have?

GEN HAMLETT: We had an average load of about a thousand.

INTERVIEWER: I think at the same time that you were at the University you were also active in the Retired Officers Association, and I believe you held the office as President there.

GEN HAMLETT: Not while I was President of Norwich. I was on the Board of Directors, but I was not elected President of the Retired Officers Association until after I left Norwich. And by the way, we called it Norwich University, because that's the name it's carried under legally on the law books of Vermont. But actually, Norwich isn't a university; it's a college. It's a rather complicated college and can give degrees of any order. That is, it's chartered to do such. We never gave anything higher than a masters degree, because advanced studies for a doctorate was just too expensive for small schools. Though the faculty kept suggesting and recommending that we have some doctoral studies, I never went along with it. No, I was elected President of the Retired Officers Association and held this position for two years from '74 through '75. I lost my Presidency in November of last year, '75. It was a very interesting period. I enjoyed it; I did a lot of travelling. A lot of people don't understand what the Retired Officers Association really stands for. They think it's a self-serving organization to do nothing but get pay, more pay and more medical service and whatnot for the retired people. This, of course, is one of the reasons for its existence, but the Retired Officers Association primarily is involved in trying to help foster stronger defense for this country. We spend a lot of time in talking with people and doing things to enhance the position of the military services and provide what help we can to strengthen

our national defense. That's the primary objective of this organization. We do do a lot of lobbying in Washington; we have licensed lobbyists. We keep abreast of everything that goes on on the Hill with respect to national defense and problems involving retired personnel in the seven uniformed services.

INTERVIEWER: General, I'd love to hear more about your personal and Retired Officer Association's view on the pay development in the Army, but we're about at the end of a reel here, so why don't we take a break and switch this and then we'll pick up there.

THIS IS THE END OF SIDE ONE, REEL SIX.

SECTION 7

THIS RECORDING IS IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE US ARMY MILITARY HISTORY RESEARCH COLLECTION, SENIOR OFFICER ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM. THE SENIOR OFFICER BEING INTERVIEWED IS GENERAL BARKSDALE HAMLETT. THE INTERVIEWERS ARE COLONEL JOHN J. RIDGWAY AND LIEUTENANT COLONEL PAUL B. WALTER, BOTH OF THE US ARMY WAR COLLEGE CLASS OF 1976. TODAY'S DATE IS 12 MARCH 1976. WE ARE AT HILTON HEAD ISLAND. THIS IS INTERVIEW NUMBER SEVEN, REEL NUMBER SIX.

INTERVIEWER: General, on the other side we were discussing your association with the Retired Officers Association. Would you care to pick up there?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, I was talking about the objectives of our association. And I think one of you asked me a question on how did we stand on the subject of new pay scales and pay raises in recent years. Well, we have supported these pay raises, except with the exception of the pay raises incident to the Volunteer Army. We oppose the Volunteer Army concept, though we made no great fight or disturbance about this. We were real skeptical about the long range outcome of getting involved with an Army of enlisted personnel, who had to be talked into joining the service rather than having a draft system, which we felt was a going concern and doing quite well. It was realized, I think, by all of us that in order to have a volunteer setup in the Armed Services, you had to pay more. And paying more and with automatic increases in pay every year is almost out of hand at this time. Now, we can't condemn this. You've got your own pay problems on one hand. And for us, as officers, to stand up and say, "You shouldn't pay those enlisted men anymore, they ought to get along on this pay," would be counterproductive to getting more people in the Army. But it is food for thought. Where are we going with this very expensive personnel problem that we have, as opposed to what we were paying personnel

when they were drafted and serving two years in the Army, because that was their duty as an American to do that? It is different than joining an Army, either as an enlisted person or as an officer of your own volition and staying in as a professional. I think I can make a good case for paying the professional commensurate with the pay received in industry. But at the same time, if you do want to save money--and we're talking about money now, pay--there are a lot of other things involved, but I'm just discussing money now. The only way you can do it on the personnel situation in the Armed Services is to have a draft and bring them in under draft conditions. I'm told, and we talked about this the other day, that the volunteer services are working out beautifully, and everybody seems to think it's all right. I don't think we've seen the end of this problem, however. We have a problem insofar as retired officers are concerned in that there is a very great difference in retired pay of various groups of officers. Those officers who retired, for instance, for either physical disability or age, after World War II; and I'm talking of the period from the end of '45 through '50 or '51 or '52, before the big pay increases were given to the Army. I think we had one large pay increase in '55 and another in '57, and then right along each year we were getting excellent pay raises to put the Army and the other services abreast with industry and what they were paying people in the same grade of positions that they were holding. So these people who retired before these pay raises are getting a good deal less, though they attained the same rank that those of us that retired after these pay raises. Now, I have no particular squak about this thing, but people who retired in

1950 do. A lieutenant general who retired in 1950 is drawing about the same amount of money as a man who retired in 1974, we'll say, as a senior warrant officer. And they don't understand this, and that's why you've heard us discussing and you've read in our magazine the equalization of pay for retired personnel. And we've made quite a pitch for this, but it's never been supported by the Administration, although they've given lip service to it. They never have supported it in Congress. And I think, unfortunately, it is my feeling that it is now a dead issue. And, of course, those of us who were retired after the large pay increases and have continued to receive percentage increases each year because of the cost of the living index are much better off than those people financially. Though even in my case, I retired in 1964, a general officer who retired last year, a four-star grade, is drawing, as I remember, somewhere in the neighborhood of six to seven thousand dollars more a year than I am. Though I have no squak about this, my pay has been increased since retirement so that my retired pay today is more than my active duty pay AND fringe benefits were in 1964. So I can't complain too much about MY personal situation. I'm all right and I have no squaks about it, but I can sympathize with the people who retired back in 1950-52 and '53, who do have hardships, which have been imposed on them because of this nonequality in pay scale.

INTERVIEWER: There are two actions going on which you may know about. One is the Defense Manpower Commission investigation into personnel policies of which I think Admiral Hubble has been a member for over two years. And the second is the Defense . . . I believe the acronym is

DOPMA, the Defense Office of Personnel Management Act, which addresses pay but addresses another point as well; and that is building and maintaining an all regular Army force with the eleventh and twelfth year in service as the cutoff point as to who will be your regular Army officers for the next 20 years assuming that they would go to the 30-year point or age 55, whichever occurred first. Had you, has your organization passed comment on either one of these two activities?

GEN HAMLETT: No, but we're watching them very closely and as I said before our position in this sort of thing is to try to help the services get what they want and what they need. There is something involved here by the way that I would like to touch on for a moment and give you my ideas. And that's the unionization of the military services. Now, there are a lot of people right now who feel that this would be a great thing. I personally oppose it tooth-and-nail. I think it would be a terrible thing, however, unless there is a recognition by the leaders in the Defense Department of the problems of the LITTLE people down the line, you're going to have unionization. And the way to stave off unionization is to have associations such as ours helping, this isn't the only way, but helping to carry the ball for the services over on the Hill when these things come up and to get the things that are really required by the people who are in the service on active duty. Every year, you know, we go through this thing of eliminating the Post Exchanges, eliminating this and eliminating that, and for instance, right now, I am terribly worried and our whole association is about the medical services in all of the military. Our medical services are disintegrating, and nobody seems

to be doing anything about this in the higher echelons. You're not going to keep doctors in the service without giving them a big bonus, and now, I understand, there's no bonus money in the budget. If this is true, then you're going to see an exodus of some very fine medical officers from the military services. Right now, it's almost impossible for a retired person to get any service in a military hospital. It's a bad problem. There are a lot of problems like this that the union and the people who are for unionization of the military, can use as a crutch for bringing this thing on. I just can't see it. I don't see how you can have union leaders telling your soldiers on one hand what they should do in order to get more pay, and then having a poor commander here commanding them to do things that they don't like to do. It's incompatible with the discipline and leadership problems that we have in the military services to unionize. I don't think it would ever work, and I'm TOTALLY against it.

INTERVIEWER: You were, of course, in the Army for nearly 34 years, and you have heard the discussion about closing commissaries and closing PXs and reducing or eliminating dental care, restricting the use of medical facilities for dependents, and other fringe benefits, would you say . . . that if these occurred, that you would see this as a breach of promise as to what you expected when you first came in the service?

GEN HAMLETT: I certainly would. I certainly would. There's no contract involved here. I don't think there's a contract involved just as we've had to admit there was no contract involved in this retired pay situation, but there certainly was an understanding of what you could expect,

what these people, who have been hurt by this equalization of pay problem say, and it's true, that when we came in the service, we expected the retired pay to go up in accordance with the raises in pay that are given to people on active duty, and this was all understood by all of us. Well, it hasn't occurred, so I must say and I go back again to the fact that insofar as I personally am concerned and people in my category, we've been getting increases which keep us from suffering from the inflation because our retired pay is raised with the inflation and we started with a good base. It's the people who didn't start with a good base.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think the Army is more susceptible to unionization with the voluntary Army concept as opposed to the draft?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, I haven't given that any thought, really. I'm saying that the Army and the other services, too, are susceptible to unionization unless they feel, that is the soldier and the noncommissioned officer and the young officers, feel that the leaders of the services are taking care of their problems. And solving their problems for them, so that they don't have to have a union for doing this. That if they have the feeling that no one is looking after them, that they're just fighting their way alone, unorganized, and that industry pay is going up, the price of food is going up and so forth, and nobody is looking after them, they're losing their fringe benefits and all these other things, then they're ripe for unionization. They're ripe for unionization. That's the point I was trying to make.

INTERVIEWER: As you know in the volunteer Army concept, we're developing the tools, which I think are right for the union to work with. In other

words we're developing contracts for enlisted men that involve either a skill, which is the union's backyard, and a grade level for performing that skill, E-2, E-3, E-4, and therein probably lies the opportunity for the union to fight for job classification and wages. Of course, a lot of us think that's where we are most susceptible by laying that contract on the table and agreeing to it, and that young man will go exactly where he has signed to go otherwise we've violated a contract. That's why we think we're wide open to the unions to negotiate job classifications and wages for that skill comparable to the market. It's going to be a touchy point. The civilians that you had working for you were probably members of the American Federation of Government Employees, AFGE, in the 1960s. Do you remember any union problems at all concerning your civilian personnel?

GEN HAMLETT: No, the only problems as I look back on it that I ever ran into with civilian personnel was trying to get rid of the incompetents. It's almost impossible to get rid of an incompetent civilian working in the military services. I once through various and it might be called DEVIOUS administrative procedures, got rid of a high-priced secretary and I answered letters about that for the next five years. And I said then, "I am never going to get involved in another case of that sort." It was awful. I have here a list of names which you gentlemen have given me and I think what you want are comments from me on what I think of these people, and on what I base my opinion. In other words, what association did I have with the various names that you present on the list. The first one is General Patton. Well, General Patton was my commander in North Africa, and I later served under him in the Third Army

when I was commanding the Division Artillery of the 16th Armored Division. And then just after World War II, I was on his staff when he was given the 15th Army Group Command, which wasn't an Army Group at all but a headquarters to make after action reports on the battles of World War II. Well, General Patton was a, to say the least, a very flamboyant character. He was a tall, straight, very MILITARY looking fellow with unfortunately a small, high pitched voice, which always detracted in my opinion from his otherwise military bearing. I frankly was never sure whether General Patton was dumb or brilliant. Because at times, he showed brilliance, and at times he showed abysmal dumbness. He was a man who felt things very deeply. I remember being with him right after his aide was killed in North Africa, a young fellow named Kerwin, and General Patton was really broken up. He was weeping, weeping, and we tried to comfort him, Ed Hart and I in his office. That was when he was commanding the II Corps in the latter part of the action down around Kasserine Pass and El Guettar. That was before Bradley came in and took over the Corps. Not because Patton had done anything wrong by the way, but because Patton was heading up a planning group for the invasion of Sicily. General Bradley took over the Corps and we moved north then as you remember, and I'll talk about Bradley because you have his name here. That was the first time that I had the opportunity to see Bradley in action and be with him. I was on his staff and he sent me north to make reconnaissance for the deployment of the Corps. After the Battle of El Guettar and the southern fighting, when we finally broke through and joined the Eighth Army we went north to round up

the Africa Corps as they moved up the coast, and pinch them off between the II Corps, US Corps, and the British Army. Bradley commanded this operation, and I must say I was VERY, VERY much impressed with General Bradley. He was a great soldier. He knew what he was doing, and he knew how to tell you in a very few words what should be done and was a most effective commander. I never saw him intimately after that, but what I thought at the time certainly proved out later in combat in Europe. Here was a man that knew his business and knew how to command. Patton was a great commander. He appealed more to the enlisted ranks than he did to the officer corps. I'd say his language sometimes was so crude that it made you shudder. But this just tickled the enlisted men to death. To death, because he got down to their level and was able to talk to them in their soldier language, and sometimes this is good. I know we've all tried it from time to time and Patton could get away with it. And that speech in the movie Patton which opens the movie was really a set piece of Patton's. I've heard him give it. And he was most effective in this type of thing, though embarrassing at times to the officers. He was a man of great courage, physical courage, and moral courage, too. He said what he thought about things, sometimes too much. And took, I thought, at times unnecessary risks for an Army Commander or a Corps Commander or a Division Commander, for that matter. But, he was a good tactician. I never felt later in reading about the operations in Europe that he was too sound logistically. I didn't think he was very sound logistically in Africa. He pushed beyond the logistic capability, but this is something that all people who've been involved in logistics and logistics planning

feel about the commander who operates along these lines. And it's give and take here. If the commander doesn't get out there on a limb, then he doesn't put the pressure on the logistician to bail him out. So, it's six of one and half dozen of the other. Patton was a soldier's soldier. He was a fighter and a good tactician, and that's about as far as I could go. General Clark, quite different. General Clark was a very straightforward person. He wasn't the flamboyant type that Patton was, but certainly a man of great intelligence, who, in my opinion, was a very fine commander. I ran into Clark in England. I went over as a member of his staff in 1942. I don't remember ever meeting him before that time. But I was impressed with him. I'd heard stories about him. He'd been G-3 of Army Ground Forces, and I'd heard about him--things he was doing and developing training programs and that sort of business. He was hard nosed about things. He was at times a very difficult person to get along with. I've been associated with him since then on, you might say, a sort of yearly basis. I've visited him in Charleston a couple of times. I've seen him in Washington. This is since we were both retired, and we have a great time reminiscing about things, though at the time I first met him I was a major and he was a major general. We're now just two old, retired generals, and I call him Wayne, which he likes to be called by his close friends. He calls me Ham, so you might say that General Clark, and I'm talking about Wayne Clark, not Bruce Clark, and I are very good friends. I have great admiration for him, though a lot of people down in Texas blame the catastrophe of the 36th Division on General Clark. I'm in no position to evaluate this feeling that they have. A lot of people just

hate him, and there are a lot of us who are very fond of him and think he was a great commander and a great person. I've already covered General Bradley. There's one of the real jewels in my estimation. I've talked about General MacArthur. I was on General MacArthur's staff in Tokyo. I was there for the beginning of the Korean War. I talked to you about this. General MacArthur was a man apart, really. I must say he had, and I've said this before, he had feet of clay about many things, . . . he overrated himself terribly. On the other hand, he could rise to the occasion and do the things that he said he could. I'm often asked, "What do you think about Truman relieving MacArthur?" Well, I must say in all frankness that I thought Truman waited too long. MacArthur was bucking him on every order that came out of Washington. If I had been in Truman's shoes, I would have relieved him long before he did. I don't like the way it was done. I think it was not done properly because MacArthur had done a tremendous job as the American Commander in Japan after the war. He did things that I don't think any other general officer in our Army could have done. They didn't have the stature to do this. But he did, and did a fine job. I felt his method of his being relieved was wrong. It could have been done other ways. General Ridgway. I'd say and I believe that this covers Ridgway insofar as I'm concerned. In my time in the Army, I don't believe I ever knew another man with more moral courage than General Ridgway. He had physical courage, too, but I'm talking about moral courage now, because he was Chief of Staff of the Army in a very difficult time. And he really laid his whole career on the

line to try to save the Army from being raped by certain forces on the political side. I don't think General Ridgway was a very likeable man. He had very few friends. I don't think he ever liked me. I always had the feeling that General Ridgway didn't like me. But on the other hand, I was in his office when I was working for the Deputy more often than I was in the Deputy's office; because he'd call on me to come in and tell him about the programs, and plans, and things that were going on in the staff. And it was embarrassing at times. Because he would, in front of me and other people, when a deputy was telling him something in a conference, he'd say, "Hamlett, what did you think about that?" which put me in opposition to the deputy, as a brigadier general. And boy, I was on the spot several times; particularly, I remember with Tony McAulry, because Tony and I had been friends and very good friends since we were lieutenants together, and he would get mad as the devil about this. And I didn't blame him; I would have, too. But General Ridgway, I liked him; though, as I say, I don't think he ever liked me. But he trusted me. He trusted me; there's no doubt about that; he trusted me with a lot of things. Then we get to General Taylor. I ran into General Taylor rather early in my career as I remember down at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, when he came there to command a battalion in the 12th Field Artillery. I never knew him well at all, except by reputation. I knew a lot of his classmates and friends. And later when I served under him when he was first as a Deputy, and then later as the Chief of Staff of the Army and then later as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I got to know General Taylor very well indeed. He was one of the real

brains in the military service though a rather brittle mentality and stubborn. He was a stubborn fellow, and there's nothing bad about being stubborn. My wife accuses me of being stubborn; but Taylor was a thinker, no doubt about that, and I didn't agree with him on a lot of things rather not on some things,

but he would listen. I never changed his mind about anything, however. He would listen to your pitch, but it didn't make much difference to him what the other fellow thought, when he, Taylor, had made up his mind. He was a strong person, a very strong person. And not only strong mentally, but a strong physical person. Christ, that man at age 65, is still playing tennis every day. And I never understood how he could do it. He'd come out in the hot sun and he'd play two sets of tennis when I wouldn't have gotten out in the sun without an umbrella and then I wouldn't play tennis, I'd sit under the umbrella and take a drink. You have noted General

Decker, I was associated with General Decker on three different occasions. The first when I was assistant to General Lemmitzer in the Pentagon, and General Decker was the Comptroller of the Army.

I was very closely associated with General Decker in budget problems and plans and programs, because what we did in my bailiwick had to dovetail with what they were doing over in his office. Of course, the budget officer under General Decker was really my opposite number, and I did business with him every day. That was George Hannang, and he was a very, very fine officer, as was General Decker, who knew his stuff as a comptroller. I never in my period in the Pentagon, I never saw a better comptroller than General Decker.

Later, I was the Corps Artillery Commander of the VII Corps in Germany when General Decker was commanding the VII Corps. And I, again, found that he was a very reasonable man and a good commander. He ran a good shop and we had a well trained Corps. General Decker was a fine Corps Commander. Then my next opportunity to serve with General Decker was as his Deputy Chief for Operations and then his Vice Chief of Staff. And General Decker, again, I would say, did a very competent job as the Chief of Staff of the Army. I felt, from time to time, however, that General Decker was a little, you might say, too inclined to agree with the Air Force or Navy position on some problem that we in the Army staff felt like there should have been a strong disagreement on. A couple of times, I don't mean to use this in a derogatory way, but after a pre-briefing and feeling that he was going to take a position in agreement with his staff, I saw him take just the opposite position and agree with the Air Force and the Navy. And this used to upset us when he would do this. It wasn't often, but I suppose this shows more character than I thought it did because he wasn't being led around by the staff as some Chiefs of Staff are inclined to be. General Lemnitzer was a, whose name appears here, was a great person, still is. One of the strongest men physically that I've ever known in my life. He can work all day and stay up all night, and work all day the next day and go out in the afternoon and play a good game of golf and then go home and read a book all night. He's just phenomenal physically. He's a very intelligent person. My problems with Lemnitzer, and I served with him again, as his assistant in the Pentagon when he was Deputy Chief of Staff of Plans and Operations AND Research

and Development, then when he was Deputy, I mean, Chief of Staff of the Army, and also when he was Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. So I had a long period in which I served intimately with General Lemnitzer. I had known General Lemnitzer since he was a lieutenant because he was an instructor at the Academy when I was a cadet there. He was a young instructor when I was a cadet. He's a tremendous person. Inclined to become involved in political affairs in my opinion to the detriment of the military side, when he was Chief of Staff of the Army and in other positions, too. I also knew him at the War College. He was the Deputy at the National War College when I was a student there, but we never saw him. He was off working on some political problem, involved with the State Department.

In other words, Lemnitzer, in my opinion, was more of a politician than he was a commander. And I don't say this in a derogatory way, because he could do both but was much more interested in the political side of affairs; things that dwelt on the political decisions rather than the military decisions. I never knew him when he was commanding a unit. I only knew him in the capacities that I've mentioned. General Weyand who is now the Chief of Staff of the Army is one of the finest officers I've ever had serve under me. I knew Weyand when he was a young officer in Korea. I knew his mother and father. They were in Japan when I was there on MacArthur's staff. His father was on loan from one of the big oil companies, I don't remember which, as a consultant for the Japanese oil industry. My brother-in-law,

was doing the same thing. He'd been with Gulf Oil and he was working in the same office with Weyand's father, and that's how I

happened to know Fred's mother and father so well. We saw a great deal of them, socially. And were very fond of them and also of Fred, whom I knew much better later on. We both served in Washington together; he was executive or aide or whatever you want to call it to Brucker, when Brucker was the Secretary of the Army and also to Bob Stevens, when Stevens was Secretary of the Army. There's a man I haven't mentioned, but he's the fellow in my opinion who broke the Joe McCarthy vendetta against the people he felt were involved in Communism and so forth. You remember the whole McCarthy deal, and they had poor Secretary Stevens up for something they dreamed up about the Army, and this man pursued the truth. I'm talking about Stevens. And when it all came out and the error was cleared up, it was Joe McCarthy who was the culprit, and not Stevens and the Army. I don't think he was ever effective after that. He was there when I first came back from the Far East Command and was working with Lemnitzer. Weyand is a great officer. I think he's doing a tremendous job as Chief of Staff. He was also with me in Berlin. I requested him as my Infantry Commander when I was commandant in Berlin, and he was there with me for a year. A great person, a great commander, very intelligent and a natural for Chief of Staff of the Army. You have Abrams' name here. I think we all, there isn't a man that ever knew Abe who wasn't fond of him, who didn't recognize his tremendous ability both as a commander and as a staff officer. He could do either and was extremely effective. The Army lost by his early death, and we were all very sad about it. He was a great person, and I don't think too many good things could be said about Abe. Jimmy Polk (General James C. Polk)

I knew Jimmy Polk as a cadet. Jimmy made his reputation really as a Cavalry Regimental Commander in World War II. He was sort of the reconnaissance screen for Patton's Third Army and he was a very effective commander in combat. I knew Jimmy off and on through the years though I never served with him. I felt that he was an effective officer.

INTERVIEWER: Excuse me, I used to work with General Polk. One of the things, . . . one of the stories about him was that he had an Article 15 in his records from World War II, when he took his unit to a town and there were some instructions to save the wine cellars because some higher headquarters wanted to use the wine. And instead he took the wine casks and gave them to his units, because they were going to rest and recover there for a couple of days before they continued the attack. And he almost bragged about that Article 15 in his record for disobeying orders and helping his troops by giving them a good wine supplement to their rations. Do you know of any incident like this, that any of the officers we've talked about already or will be talking about?

GEN HAMLETT: Yes, I took all the wine out of the cellars in Nuremberg and gave them to my troops, and they followed me for several weeks trying to find out what I had done with all that wine. That went on all the time. You were supposed to leave the wine under guard, and I don't remember whether it was a standing order or what, but if you filched the wine, then you were apt to get in to trouble, and no doubt that was what Jimmy was talking about. We all did it. We would get the, usually the wehrmach stocks that were actually not private stocks, but stocks that belonged to the Army or some of the Nazi people. We thought that was

free booty. We never paid much attention to orders with respect to that type of thing, though it had to be done very carefully insofar as doling it out to the troops, because you couldn't afford to have a bunch of drunk soldiers while you were engaged in combat.

INTERVIEWER: Wasn't General Polk the Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development when you were in DCSOPS?

GEN HAMLETT: I don't remember this because our paths crossed so many times and I've known him so intimately as a cadet that I lose track of when it was I saw or served with Polk. But Polk was a good commander. O'Meara, whose name you have down here, was a classmate of mine, and was Director of Gunnery at Fort Sill when I went back to Fort Sill after World War II after attending the French War College. It was O'Meara who went with me to General Andrews' office one day when General Andrews told us that they were forming a new artillery group at Fort Sill and that he wanted one of us to command it. And before O'Meara could open his mouth, I said, "Well, General Andrews, I'm going to give way to my friend O'Meara here because he hasn't had as much command as I have had and I think it would be a great thing if he took command of the group." I think O'Meara could have cut my throat, because he wanted to remain as Director of Gunnery just as much as I wanted to be Director of Gunnery. But he never had a chance to say, "No, General, I don't want to command," because no one can make this statement. And so O'Meara and I have always been very

close, very close friends. O'Meara has the reputation of being rather tough and mean. And I've had to commiserate with junior officers many times about treatment that they had received from O'Meara. O'Meara was reputed to be trying to follow in the footsteps of another famous character who had the reputation of being mean as a rattlesnake and that was Willie Palmer. And he was one of Willie Palmer's proteges, and I'm not competent to say whether he was trying to act like Willie Palmer or not, but O'Meara was a very effective commander. And this goes back to another thing that we discussed. Everyone has to command in their own manner, and no two people can command alike, and O'Meara was reputed to be a mean commander, a man who relieved people if they didn't toe right up to the mark. And he would tell you that himself. So although I was very fond of O'Meara and I never had any personal problems with O'Meara in our entire service and served UNDER him as his assistant at Fort Sill for quite a period, O'Meara did have the reputation of being a real tough character. And I think he was rather proud of it. But that's the personality of O'Meara as opposed to the personality of other people I've known. Then you come to a young man here named DePuy. Yes, DePuy was in the Pentagon when I was there as a Deputy and also as Vice Chief of Staff. And I was impressed with DePuy's ability to get things done. But DePuy was a hard case young man. He was really mean. We were talking about O'Meara having a reputation of being tough. It wasn't nearly as strong as the one that DePuy garnered later. I heard many stories about DePuy and how he would relieve officers, some early, for almost any dereliction and would not take the time to listen to their story and so forth. I can't

vouch for all of this. My feeling was that DePuy was a very intelligent, very sharp officer when he worked under me. But a man who was out for DePuy. A man who was working a lot for his own good. Maybe I'm wrong. Now, Westmoreland, whose name appears next, I first met on the battlefield on a very rainy, windy night in North Africa when I was with the British 6th Division, or a brigade of the 6th Division, in the Battle of Kasserine Pass. Westmoreland was commanding the medium battalion of the 9th Division Artillery. And this battalion had made a forced march of I don't know how long but they had come all the way from Morocco up into Algeria arriving as I say at night with the roads in terrible condition, the guns sliding off and getting stuck. We finally got them into a position that I had selected, fortunately, before nightfall, and I can remember Westmoreland said, "What's my mission and field of fire?" And I said, "Just be sure you fire over that hill in front of you and start firing as soon as you're ready, because it's going to give the British troops out there a great boost if you can make a lot of noise back here." And he did, and it did help. Just getting that battalion in there at night, I think, turned the picture insofar as the German advance was concerned, because the minute those 155 shells started dropping back there, it was apparent that they became discouraged about further attacks the next day because we had the word that they were to attack, and they didn't. And this was, you've read about this in later stories and articles on the intelligence during World War II; we actually had intelligence, electronics, intercept type of intelligence and were reading the Germans--this was the British, the British were doing it--reading the German codes, and we did

know when they were going to attack. We'd know to the minute when they were going to attack because it would come to us through intelligence channels. And several times the commander didn't heed this warning and the commands were pretty well chewed up because of it. Westmoreland had a great reputation; even at that time as a young officer, he was on the way up. He had been the first captain, I believe, at West Point, which is the number one cadet in the chain of command, and joined the Field Artillery and had done very well indeed. I didn't get to know him during the African campaign, except that he was very competent as a commander as far as I could find out and learn. I saw him several times later, when we were in combat further north. I ran into him again in the Pentagon when he was the Secretary of the General Staff, and I was Oakes' assistant. As you know, the Secretary of the General Staff has a lot of problems, and most people get on his nerves and he gets on their nerves; however, I always had very fine rapport with Westmoreland. I liked him very much, and later was able to see him quite often when he was Superintendent at West Point. Actually, he worked under me as Superintendent of West Point when I was Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Operations. The directives for West Point went out of my office and I reviewed the problems that came up--honor cases and things of this sort--and had quite a number of visits with Westmoreland, both in my office and at West Point. I was in on the conference that had to do with selecting Westmoreland later as the man we wanted to send out to Vietnam; as you remember Max Taylor was then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He actually chose Westmoreland to go out there and take that job. There was some skepticism about whether

Westmoreland had the background and the political savvy to do that job. And a very curious thing, you know, I'd been to the French War College and I spoke fairly decent French; and by that time, this thing was building up so in Vietnam that it looked like we were going to have a real hoedown. There wasn't much done about it. And I told the Secretary of the Army and Bus Wheeler when this thing was being discussed, I said, "I'll tell you what; I'll volunteer to go out there as a Commander. I think I can do that job." And they looked at me and said, "You're not going any place. You're going to stay RIGHT there in that office behind that desk because we have some other plans for you later on." I never knew what the plans were, but later on Bus became the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and about the same time I was stretched out with this heart attack.

INTERVIEWER: You were able to observe General Westmoreland; of course, you were out of the Army then, but between the television reports and the news reports on how he was conducting the war, what was your opinion of General Westmoreland then?

GEN HAMLETT: You mean the opinion that I made of Westmoreland based on the newspapers articles and whatnot?

INTERVIEWER: Or any conversation that you had with him afterwards.

GEN HAMLETT: Well, my feeling was that he was doing quite well in an impossible position. Just . . . that command out there was a terrible drain on anyone. I think that to make a comment on his command out there, just based on what I read in the newspapers, would be unfair. Now, I did talk to an old friend of mine, who had been one of the really top correspondents in Berlin when I was commanding in Berlin, and who at the

time we were having this conversation was the number two man in the New York Times, and he had been in Vietnam. Of course, the Times had had correspondents out there the whole time during Westmoreland's regime there as commander. This man said that he just thought the world and all of Westmoreland as a person. He felt that he was a good commander insofar as commanding men and whatnot, but that he was NAIVE politically. That is, why Westmoreland had the troubles that he did, was his naivety, politically, in the situation in which he found himself. Now, this was not my statement; it was the statement of the man who was competent to make such a judgment, but I pass it on for what it's worth. I never have discussed it with Westy; I wouldn't want to tell Westy he was naive politically, but I couldn't help but agree with this evaluation when I saw Westy running for Governor of South Carolina. I thought this was the greatest mistake that he could possibly make.

INTERVIEWER: One of the most critical periods of General Westmoreland's command was his body count procedures. I know there are many views on both sides and it really, some say it even led to a breach of integrity knowing that you had to produce a body count to be judged successful. What was your personal opinion of the policy itself, the body count policy with all of your combat experience?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, I think it leads to just that. I think, I saw the same thing happen in Korea, body counts; people saying that they killed so many enemy and whatnot when I knew damn well they hadn't killed that many people. And I always was very skeptical of reports that came to me about the destructive power of our artillery when we put down a concentration

somewhere, because it just didn't jive with the tests that I have been involved in with artillery all my military life. And I think that this is a PIPE dreaming exercise FORCED on the combat troops by people who wanted, really, TOO much information about what was going on. I think the body count was generated by McNamara and the Department of Defense. I can remember when they were demanding to know how many people were killed every morning. I don't think you ever know. I think it's one of the things that leads to a type of thing that you are talking about. People just out and out lying about this, and they sort of feel that they can do this because there is no way, and there isn't, that anyone can ever verifv (the date thus) no one can ever prove that they're lying about this. So this is the way that they do it. If you want a body count, then you ought to cut off the ears and bring them in and count the ears, and then save them so you can prove your date. Counting is an old business, as you know, the Indians used to do it. The British had a body count when we were fighting the Revolution. They had the Indians bring in the scalps and they paid them so much a scalp. That was a real good body count. But the Indians would fudge on that, you know. They'd bring in scalps of people that had just died or those that some other had killed. I understand from reading history that sometimes the Indians would cut a scalp into four pieces and get paid for each piece. So this body count business has always been or has always led to some sort of business that wasn't quite on the up and up.

After Westmoreland, you've asked me about Gavin. I knew Gavin very well, indeed. I knew Jim Gavin as a cadet. He was in the class ahead of me at

West Point and I knew him there. I knew him as a young lieutenant. He was always, I thought, a very competent officer. Jim was a quiet person. He was quiet until he got to talking about serious things and usually this had to do with the military. He was a dedicated soldier and was a fine division commander. I've never heard anyone who didn't sing his praises as a division commander. He came to the Pentagon when I was there in 1955.

Ridgway brought him as G-3, and he had a very fine group of officers in G-3, so he didn't have any problems with G-3. But when Lemnitzer moved on, then he was made Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Research and Development.

Jim became so involved in this tremendous scope of responsibility that he overburdened himself with things that other people should have been doing. He tried to do it all. He tried to be the Chief of Research and Development. He tried to run my office. He tried to continue to be the G-3 of the Army and also getting tremendously involved in the JCS deliberations, which he had a terrible time with because they were very intricate problems involved in things that he hadn't been in on before. And he spent hours studying the JCS papers, I just felt that Jim didn't have the flexibility that was needed in that job. Now I certainly could have been wrong, and I left the Pentagon about that time when he was struggling with all these things and went on to Germany and got a command out there. I liked Jim Gavin, and I've seen him on occasion since we both retired, several times, and I think Jim makes sense. Some people think he's dumb; I don't think Jim's dumb. He's just quiet; he's not a flamboyant type. He's not always expressing himself, but when asked to express himself on a

subject that he knows something about, he's very articulate. Does that cover Gavin?

INTERVIEWER: It sure does, sir.

GEN HAMLETT: Adams, you're talking here about Paul Adams?

INTERVIEWER: Paul D. Adams, yes, sir.

GEN HAMLETT: Oh, Paul gave me lots of problems. Paul was the Assistant Division Commander of the Division in Korea when I reported as Division Artillery Commander of the, what the hell division was it?

INTERVIEWER: 24th.

GEN HAMLETT: 24th Division. You know, we've talked so much I'm getting kind of confused now about everything. But he was Assistant Division Commander, and we worked very closely together on defensive plans, on artillery fires, and I saw him all the time. We were, both young brigadiers, who were full of "pee and vee" and ready to take over the division, the corps, the Army, or anything else, and so we traveled the front a lot. I'd meet him at various places, where probably neither one of us should have been.

I liked Paul Adams as a person, but he was a stubborn, difficult person to get along with. And he got worse as he got older, and by the time I was Vice Chief of Staff and he was a four-star general and had been put in command of the STRIKE Command, he was a real thorn in my side, because he was always in Washington demanding solutions to problems that were not solvable. And, of course, one of them was this problem that we had with the Navy and the Marines and the other budgetary problems. Where was his headquarters going to be moved? Where was the money coming from for maneuvers? And, my goodness, he had ideas about doing maneuvers that

we just couldn't find a fifth of the money that he required for all the things that he demanded be done. But we still managed to get along, and he used to jump on my action officers when they'd come up to give briefings. I lost my temper with him one day. I sat him down real hard. I guess I took advantage of my position as Vice Chief of Staff, but he never got upset about it. We were still friends. I went down and went quail hunting with him sometime after that and we had a good time together. But Paul was tough, and he could be meaner than a snake. Does that cover Adams?

INTERVIEWER: If you say so, sir.

GEN HAMLETT: I got lots of complaints about Adams from various and sundry people. Some of them in the other services, though I must say the other Chiefs and the Joint Chiefs felt that Adams was doing a good job, and he did do a good job. That was a terrific job we gave him of organizing that STRIKE Command, and he did it, and he did it well, and he set up a fine headquarters. You asked me to comment on Ted Walker. Now, Ted Walker, I knew as a young officer out at Fort Sill. And he was a peculiar type even then. His housekeeper was an old aunt of his, a very fine lady who came there to live with him and to look after him and his house. I don't remember if Ted was ever interested in any girl. He was a sort of a lone wolf who would show up at parties from time to time. He was a very fine horseman and spent a lot of money. He had money. He had outside money, which very few of us had, and he had good horses and played good polo and was involved more in the horsey life at Fort Sill, so I didn't see too much of him there. But I always felt that he was sort of on the peculiar

side. I don't mean queer, don't get that idea. He was a rough and ready, tough fellow, but different. He was different. You know when you're different, people don't understand this. He wasn't cut out of the same cloth as most of us young artillery officers were. I ran into Ted from time to time after that. I can't put these meetings in sequence, but I do remember Ted's problem in Germany when he was commanding a division and became involved with the John Birch Society. He did some things that were REALLY just not understandable. I was convinced at the time, and I think things that he did later on bore this out, that this fellow had slipped mentally. I've always felt that something happened to Ted Walker mentally. He had been a good soldier. He had been involved in combat and had done well. No doubt, deserved his promotion to major general and Division Commander. But, believe you me, the things that he did, and I know of these things, I had to review them; as a Division Commander were just out of line, completely out of line. They weren't sensible. They depicted a man who was unsettled mentally. And that was why he was brought back and relieved and what had caused all the trouble that he got into. I have no sympathy for him, except I sympathize with anybody who has mental problems. And that's what I know about Ted Walker.

INTERVIEWER: Who was actually responsible for firing him? Was that done out of Washington and relayed down the line?

GEN HAMLETT: I frankly don't remember. I think it was the Secretary of the Army that was behind this whole thing, getting rid of him. He was a terrible embarrassment, not only to the Army, but to the military service.

This was the thing that got spread all over the papers;

He had become terribly racist and fascist or whatever you want to call it. I mean he was a John Bircher. This wasn't one of the things that you could do and still maintain your position as a commander at the level he was working at. I always liked Ted Walker. As a matter of fact, most of the people who knew Ted liked him. They always felt as they would say, Ted is kind of crazy anyway. I mean this is the way you felt when he was a youngster. But he wasn't a fellow that you disliked. He wasn't a man you disliked; there was nothing mean about Ted. Or I never saw that; he may have been mean. Now you have a name here that really brings back a lot of memories to me, and we're getting over into some political names, is David Bruce. David Bruce was the Ambassador to Western Germany with headquarters in Bonn, when I was the Commandant in Berlin. And as Ambassador, he was the high commissioner insofar as Berlin was concerned, and I was his Deputy. This was a holdover, you see, from the first setup over there when we had a high commissioner for all of Germany; and then when the German government was reformed, and they brought in an ambassador, then the ambassador acted just as that, as Ambassador to Germany. He also held the hat as the high commissioner with respect to the occupied territory. Berlin is still an occupied territory

The American Commander, and this grew from years of trial and error became his deputy, and the head of the State Department mission in Berlin, which during my time in Berlin was as large certainly, and I was told larger than the Ambassador's setup in Bonn.

Certainly with all of the intelligence people that nominally reported,

or rather we supported, they reported to me only when they thought there was something I should know about. Or when I insisted on knowing about it. We had quite a setup there. It was under the jurisdiction of the ambassador. My other job was, of course, that of the military commander and I reported to the Commanding General of USAREUR in Heidelberg, who was General Hodes at the time. I found that David Bruce was one of the most responsible, intelligent, and knowledgeable people that I've ever met. This man had been involved in government work for years at his own, almost his own expense. He was a man of wealth. I mean David didn't have to worry about money, and he was devoted to the American ideal. He was a typical, thorough, representative of America and Americanism and everything we stood for without being silly about it. I mean he was just a thorough man all the way through. It's hard for me to really say in words or rather picture David Bruce in words because he was a complicated person. He had lots of ideas about lots of things, and he was one of the most approachable people that I ever worked for. Always willing to listen, not only willing, but asking for comments and wanting to know what you thought about this before he made some decision on problems vis-a-vis Berlin and the Russians and so forth. My work there as Commandant working for David Bruce was just very happy indeed. I can never say anything against David Bruce. I think he is one of the great Americans of our era. And hasn't really gotten the publicity that he should because he never wanted it. The next on your list is Willy Brandt. Willy was a great person, as you know, was and is. As far as I know, he was in the city government when I first went to Berlin as commander. And after the death

of the ober-Bergermister and a fill in by some woman whose name I don't remember as an ober-Bergermister for a short period, Willy was elected as ober-Bergermister of Berlin, which was a big job. I mean, being the ober-Bergermister of Berlin was quite a position, and it still is. I think probably it had a lot more publicity then than it does now, because we were having a lot more trouble. And right now I don't even know who the ober-Bergermister of Berlin is because things have been so quiet there that his name is never mentioned. But Willy's name was mentioned all the time in the press all over the world, because of the problems we were having in Berlin and he was involved in. I would say that I got to know Willy very intimately. We were friends. His family would come over to our house and we would go over to theirs, and that sort of thing. The young boy called my wife, Aunt. I could always trust Willy Brandt. Anything that Willy told me I knew was true, and the other commanders, the British and French commanders, felt the same way about him. We held him in VERY, VERY high regard. And though perhaps his party affiliation was questionable, I mean the party itself was questionable, how many true Socialists and Communists were involved in his party operation was a question with all of us, Willy turned the Socialist party around to a considerable extent while he was the ober-Bergermister in Berlin and afterward when he became involved in the political picture in West Germany. So, a lot of people, and I know Germans who don't trust Willy, because they say he's a tool of the Leftist and radicals and all this, were very much opposed to him as Chancellor of Germany. I always felt he did a good job. I thought he was a fine leader of the German people,

and I saw him several times by the way after I came back to the States. Whenever he came to Washington, he always looked me up and would come over to our quarters and have a drink with us or break some bread. Even when I was at Norwich and once after I moved down here, he requested that the German Ambassador get me up to Washington to see him. And I did, I went up there each time I was invited because I did want to see him. And he always wanted to talk about our days in Berlin together. I think he showed a great deal of courage in resigning when he did, rather than having a big argument, a lot of publicity over the problems that were entailed when that fellow was caught, who worked very closely with him, as a spy. I knew that man, but I never suspected him.

INTERVIEWER: Some contemporary critics say that Willy Brandt was entirely two ambitions, and then others say that he was likened very much to the style and mold of John F. Kennedy. Do you call that a fair appraisal?

GEN HAMLETT: No, no, I wouldn't. I don't think he was at all like John F. Kennedy. They were completely different in my estimation and I knew them both. Willy was a much deeper person, a deeper thinker and a broader gauge, and more politically astute than Kennedy in my opinion. Willy was, or is, an unusual person. He's a tremendous linguist. His English is better than mine. He thinks in English and then he'd switch to French just like that and think in French. Jump to Swedish and be thinking in Swedish, and then talk to a Norwegian on the other side of the room in Norwegian. I've never seen a linguist like him. He just

jumps from one language to the other, just bing, bing, bing. I guess Walters, you remember Colonel Walters, in our Army was this type of linguist, too. Well, that was one of the things about Willy that always amazed me. How he could do this, and he was a rather deep person and deep thinker. If one thing can be said about Willy that wasn't good, he was a heavy drinker at times. And I was told--I don't know whether this is true or not--but I was told that he was drinking so to excess in his last days as Chancellor that he wasn't too effective. Now, this is just hearsay. I don't know a damn thing about it. But I was told that by some Germans who didn't like him. And there's no telling what people will say about you if they don't like you. He had a lovely wife, Ruth Brandt. I speak in past tense--I don't mean to--he still has a lovely wife. I think of Berlin and the days I was there, she was just a gorgeous person and a great personality, and she and my wife were great friends. They were excellent friends. Well, we go from Willy Brandt to Secretary Brucker. I've already talked to you about Brucker. Brucker was all Army and no doubt about it but he used to drive us crazy. Cyrus Vance was, as you know, Secretary of the Army during the period that I was Vice Chief of Staff. He moved up to be the Assistant Secretary of Defense while I was still Vice Chief. I had the highest regard for Vance, a very, very knowledgeable person. He's an attractive personality; nothing that I could say about Vance that wouldn't be good. He knew his business; he worked hard, and I have the greatest admiration for him. I've had dinner with him a couple of times in New York since my retirement, and he hasn't changed a bit; he's just a great person. Gates, I did get

to know Gates fairly well when I was Deputy Chief of Staff for the Army and he was the Secretary of Defense. And I felt that the biggest problem insofar as Gates was concerned and the Army was the fact that he and Brucker were at sword points all the time about anything that came up and I felt that the Army insofar as Gates was concerned lost because of this vendetta between the two men. He'd make decisions against the Army, not because he was trying to make them against the Army, he was just making them against Brucker, because he didn't like Brucker. I've seen Gates several times since then. I called on him a couple of times when I was President of Norwich University and I moved our account to his bank down in Washington when he was President of Morgan Guaranty. I was always welcome in his office and could talk as long as I wanted to talk, although I never could get him to help me in some fund-raising projects that I had. He never was standoffish about it; he just said he was too involved in other things. And I understood that. I liked Gates; he used to have lunch occasionally with the Deputies, and we gave a little party for him the day before he left the Pentagon when McNamara was coming in as Secretary, and that's--I've referred to this before--that's when he told us that he had told McNamara that he, "By God, had better get tough with those Chiefs, because they tried to run him, and the only way he could do his job as Secretary was to run them." This was after a number of martinis, but it turned out to be true. I think McNamara listened to Gates from things that happened afterwards, but Gates was, as far as I know, a good Secretary of Defense. He certainly didn't impress me as being a power seeker.

Wilson, do you mean Charlie Wilson, the one called "Engine Charlie," Secretary of Defense? I was in his office a number of times for briefings about Army programs, plans and things. Went up with General Ridgway two days in a row. I remember after coming back to the office, General Ridgway was so mad he could hardly talk. Because all during the briefing and all during the time that Ridgway was talking, Brucker was looking out the window and not paying a damn bit of attention to what Ridgway was telling him. And then it was all over, he just grunted and said, "That's all, that's all, that's all." And sort of dismissed Ridgway. I didn't blame Ridgway, and we were sitting there in the office. I was getting things together, and he said, "Did you notice that man never looked at me one time when I was talking to him? Sat there and gazed out the window when I was talking about this important business." I said, "Yes, sir, I noticed." Well, this wasn't the beginning of the problem between Wilson and Ridgway because this apparently had built up in other areas that I didn't know about, but he never had any use for Wilson and apparently the feeling was mutual. It wasn't a good situation. Again, I know nothing of Wilson personally. I couldn't make any comments on Wilson. I thought he was, insofar as I was concerned,

a very POOR Secretary of Defense, because he didn't act as the Secretary. Really, he just did what General Eisenhower told him he wanted done, and he wouldn't listen to anybody. It wasn't only for Ridgway that he looked out the window. I understand for anyone that came up to brief him on military subjects, he looked out the window, because he'd already made up his mind about what he was going to do. This wasn't good.

I've discussed McNamara at length with you, and I don't think I ought to get into McNamara anymore. McNamara is a controversial character. I think he did things that were not in the best interest of the country or the Department of Defense while he was Secretary. On the other hand, I must admit that he did do a lot in straightening out the problems vis-a-vis the services and our inner-service fights by taking them into his office and making decisions, and it was the fault of the Chiefs that he had to do this. It wasn't his fault. It was a way to solve the problem. He couldn't get them to solve it so he solved it. President Kennedy's name you have here. I was in Kennedy's office on a number of occasions, and I thought he was a most attractive person, and he liked to listen, and he liked to talk. But there was one thing about President Kennedy that always bothered me. He never did anything and never talked with any of us--the military--that I know of without having Bobby Kennedy in the office. I always felt, and I'm not intimate enough or was not intimate enough with what went on in the White House to know this to be true, but I always felt that he didn't make a move as President unless Bobby approved it. I think in some ways we had dual Presidency. I think we had Kennedy as President and Bobby as his advisor, close advisor, who in some ways could be said to be the brains of the combination. That would be a good thing for somebody to look into and make a study if you want to know more about the Kennedy administration, but that was the idea that I had after having been in the office several times with the two of them. You have President Johnson's name down here. Well, I talked to you about Johnson before. I think it's in the other

tape that you have, so I won't expand on that. I never had any use for Johnson and was worried about him as President because I thought he was the worst President that we ever had. You have Ford's name down here. I knew Ford very well as a Congressman. He actually visited us in Berlin--he and Betty Ford. I was always impressed with him. I thought he was a tremendous person. I appeared before his committee from time to time. He was always most affable and listened to you and we always got, . . . I thought the Army always got a break from Ford when we needed it. I've been somewhat disappointed in Ford as President. Though I must admit he came in under tremendous pressures, and it's difficult to stand up as a great President under the circumstances under which he took over the Presidency. I think he's running a fairly good race right now. I'll probably vote for him. As I look at the field today, he's the best around. I haven't found anyone I'd rather see sitting there in the White House who's in the race now, either Republican or Democrat. So, for my money, I hope he's reelected, and I don't think we'll really know whether he has the ability to make a good President until he served a term of his own, and is able to straighten out some of the things that are still spluttering around Washington as an aftermath of the Watergate.

INTERVIEWER: This is the end of reel number six, side number two.

INTERVIEW WITH GENERAL BARKSDALE HAMLETT

by

Colonel John J. Ridgway
Lieutenant Colonel Paul B. Walter

THIS RECORDING IS IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE US ARMY MILITARY HISTORY RESEARCH COLLECTION, SENIOR OFFICER ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM. THE SENIOR OFFICER BEING INTERVIEWED IS GENERAL BARKSDALE HAMLETT. THE INTERVIEWERS ARE COLONEL JOHN J. RIDGWAY AND LIEUTENANT COLONEL PAUL B. WALTER, BOTH FROM THE US ARMY WAR COLLEGE CLASS OF 1976. TODAY'S DATE IS 12 MARCH 1976. WE ARE AT HILTON HEAD ISLAND. THIS IS INTERVIEW #7, REEL #7, A CONTINUATION OF INTERVIEW #7 ON REEL #6.

INTERVIEWER: General Hamlett, we've had a series of interviews that covered nearly 34 years of military life, and we've captured a number of your boyhood remembrances in preparing for your career and we've even discussed some of your activities since you retired from the Army. Is there anything that stands out in your mind, any person or any incident or any philosophy that you'd share with us now in summary of your life in the military?

GEN HAMLETT: Well, in summary of the things that we've been discussing I hope that any historian who uses the information which we have put on tapes will understand that the things that I've said must be regarded in light of the times that these incidents occurred. I came in the Army at a time when the Army was a completely volunteer institution, and I call it an institution because that's really just what it was. It was a big family. There were a lot of things wrong. We didn't know nearly as much about training as we do now. We had very poor equipment. We were behind, tremendously behind, in research and development, and I would say we were coasting along. And that was the sort of Army that I was

introduced to as a 2nd Lieutenant. And most of us serving at that time, who were looking into the future, felt that there were an awful lot of things that could be done to improve the Army but we really . . . as I look back on it . . . as young lieutenants didn't have the faintest idea how to go about this. It was a good life. We worked hard mostly in the morning, and then played hard in the afternoon and nights. Training was over by noon each day and the rest of the day was spent looking after housekeeping, riding horses, training polo ponies and a myriad of things that kept us in pretty good physical condition. The social life was charming and it was a most enjoyable life but really not conducive to bettering national defense as such, and I think that all of us realized this. With the clouds of war on the horizon in Europe in the '30s when Hitler was rattling the saber and things were beginning to occur, our leaders did take steps to do something about improving national defense and the situation as we saw it. But it was a long drawn-out process and right up until the time when we were attacked by the Japanese we were still just muddling along. But after that, I saw this country go into high gear and the things that were done and the developments that were made in a very short time were tremendous, just tremendous. It was something that none of us who went through this period

and lived through the expansion of all the services, will ever forget.

I would say that 99 percent of the American people were behind what we were doing. This is the thing that I feel that we lack today. We lack a will. We lack the will to do the things that I feel, as many of us do,

should be done by the greatest nation in the world today. IF we are going to REMAIN the greatest nation in the world today, we must inculcate a NEW WILL in the people. We must have BETTER leadership in order to do this and this is the thing basically, which I think is wrong right now with our country, is lack of GOOD leadership. And I'm not referring to the military. I think in the military we still have fine officers, fine leaders, and whatnot, but there's been a dirth of leadership among our politicians. I do hope that we can generate the type of leadership that will take us out of this stumbling and bumbling that we are involved in today. I'm optimistic enough to think that we will. As I look back on my Army career, I wouldn't trade it for any other type of career. If I had to do it over again, it's just exactly what I'd want to do. I enjoyed EVERY minute of it. Now, that's stretching it a little bit. There were really times when I wasn't enjoying it a damn bit but in a broad sense it was a very rewarding career. I was lucky. I was luckier than a lot of people. I was at the right place at the right time on many occasions and received accolades which really in some ways I didn't deserve, which mitigated for me in promotion and so forth. But it was a great career, great service and I'm happy and proud to have been part of this great Army that we have during the period when I was on active duty. There are a lot of problems today. I know that you younger officers who are coming along are facing problems that are almost insurmountable, and solutions are hard to come by and there is a lot of work to be done. What I see right now looks good to me. I think we have a tremendous leader in the Chief of Staff of the Army. I

don't know of any better schooling system in the world than the military school system and particularly our school system in the Army. Our training and our service schools, our advanced schools, and our war college, such as you two officers are attending now. There is just nothing like it any place else or in any other military establishment that I know of. So, all I can say in conclusion is that I went a long ways in the Army, and it was a very pleasant journey and I wish I could do it all over again.

INTERVIEWER: General Hamlett, we really appreciate the opportunity to have interviewed you. You have certainly been very candid with us and we both are extremely pleased with your cooperation throughout the period of the interviews. You are very reluctant to take credit where we have felt that credit was due : youand this has certainly been a great experience for Jack and I. I'm sure Jack feels the same way.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, it's been a privilege peeking behind the shades, sir, and I think you have raised them for us and it's just a pleasure for me to note that integrity and duty and devotion and an understanding of what makes the military in the country work has been your pledge for your entire life. We thank you for your cooperation and your very gracious support.

GEN HAMLETT: Thank you.

24 Sep 76
(Date)

MEMORANDUM FOR: DIRECTOR, USAMHRC, CARLISLE BARRACKS, PA 17013

SUBJECT: Access to My Oral History Audio and Video Tapes and Their Transcripts

1. My initials have been placed adjacent to one of the possible access arrangements under subparagraphs a, b, and c below to indicate the degree of accessibility I desire.

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Barksdale Hamlett

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Barbara A. Hamlett
(Signature)

Barbara A. Hamlett
(Print Name)

6 Sept 1976
(Date)

ACCESS AGREEMENT

MEMORANDUM FOR: DIRECTOR, USAMHRC, CARLISLE BARRACKS, PA 17013

SUBJECT: Access to My Oral History Audio and Video Tapes and Their
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I consent to have my Oral History Transcripts placed in the US Army Center of Military History, Washington, D. C., for use by members of the Army Staff and other official agencies in preparation of official papers.

I understand that my transcripts will not be otherwise disseminated or reproduced without the consent of the Commanding General, Center of Military History.

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